Under the Red Flag

BY

EDWARD KING

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
FIAT
MDCCCLXVIII

EX LIBRIS

From
Aunt-Eleanor

GRANDPA DRUBAL FINDS LITTLE WILL.

UNDER THE RED FLAG

OR

THE ADVENTURES OF TWO AMERICAN BOYS IN THE DAYS OF THE COMMUNE

BY

EDWARD KING

AUTHOR OF "MY PARIS," "EUROPE IN STORM AND CALM," ETC., ETC.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES
LIBRARY

PHILADELPHIA
HENRY T. COATES & CO.

COPYRIGHT, 1895,
BY
PORTER & COATES.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES
LIBRARY

PS
2174
K38m

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Place Vendôme,	1
II.	The Commune Strikes Home,	18
III.	Citizen Jean is Called,	35
IV.	Citizeness Marcelle,	45
V.	Grandpa Drubal Becomes Famous,	56
VI.	Battle and Disaster,	74
VII.	The Advent of Sny,	90
VIII.	On Montmartre,	111
IX.	A Breakfast with Sny,	129
X.	Frank and the Hunchback,	147
XI.	Sny in Hospital,	163
XII.	The 101st to the Front,	181
XIII.	Sny's Ghost and the Spies,	193
XIV.	The Blow from the Dark,	215
XV.	A Friend in Need,	225
XVI.	Frank Feels the Blow,	240
XVII.	Dombrowski at Dinner,	252
XVIII.	Again the Hunchback,	264
XIX.	Plot and Counterplot,	280
XX.	Dombrowski Adopts Frank,	294
XXI.	In which Sny Reappears and Disappears,	312

484074
LIBRARY

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXII.	After Five Weeks,	328
XXIII.	In la Grande Roquette,	344
XXIV.	Frank Saves Laurette,	355
XXV.	The Advanced Post by the Seine,	370
XXVI.	The Capture by Night,	383
XXVII.	The Tocsin,	399
XXVIII.	Frank Makes many Discoveries,	410
XXIX.	Almon Corners Repents,	428
XXX.	Laurette at the Barricade,	445
XXXI.	The Letter from Dombrowski,	455
XXXII.	The Forlorn Hope,	470
XXXIII.	The Convent Refuge,	484
XXXIV.	Their Desperate Mission,	500
XXXV.	Before the Tribunal,	515
XXXVI.	Frank and His Companions to the Rescue,	528
XXXVII.	Calm After Storm,	543

UNDER THE RED FLAG.

CHAPTER I.

THE PLACE VENDÔME.

THE face fascinated the two boys.

Will clung tightly to Frank's hand as he gazed up at the strange features carved in the time-blackened stone.

He felt like running away, for the face, with its fantastic and mocking smile, its widely-opened eyes, which seemed to express a vague horror in weird contrast to the merry lips, thrilled his heart with fear.

Yet he could not take his eyes from it.

"See, Will," said Frank, "there's another one! Don't they look as if they wanted to eat us?"

Little Will recoiled so suddenly, and pressed Frank's hand so nervously, that his brother felt impelled to add reassuringly:

"But they can't! They're old stone things, made more'n two hundred years ago. Grandpa said so."

"Ho!" said Will; "would they stop eating, Frank, because they are old? Grandpa don't do that."

"Well, your grandpa isn't made out of stone, is he?"

"No, that's so," replied Will gravely. He looked up at Frank, wondering when he would be able to talk as learnedly as his elder brother. "Why, they're all around us, Frank! Look, look!"

"Yes, they run along the wall, 'way up to the other end of the square. I wonder why a man wanted to waste his time carving out such things? See that one! How it scowls!"

The boys walked slowly down the broad pavement facing the line of quaint, old-fashioned palatial edifices which border the lower part of the Place Vendôme.

The fancy of the architect of Louis XIV.'s time who built these roomy and imposing structures blossomed into the decorative faces which so interested the two boys.

The great stone masks were still where they were placed in the closing years of the seventeenth century, and will doubtless look down for many generations to come upon the tragedies and comedies which will have their brief hours in this central quarter of Paris.

"Say, Frank," said Will, as they paused before an arched doorway leading into a courtyard, beyond which they could catch a glimpse of tall shrubbery in regular rows, and the upraised gleaming arm of a marble statue airily poised on a stone pedestal, "how did all the faces come there, anyway?"

"A man put them there, of course. You don't suppose they grew there, do you?" replied Frank, bestowing a swift glance upon the small Will, whose six years' presence in the world had not enabled him to submit everything to the test of reason.

"What man put 'em there, Frank?" pursued Will calmly.

"Oh, I don't know! Some old Frenchman who died ever and ever so long ago."

"What did he put 'em there for, Frank?" piped Will.

"Why, to look at, I s'pose," Frank answered rather crossly, for he knew that when Will was once started on a series of questions, he was capable of keeping it up all day.

No display of temper could shake Will's purpose when he was in pursuit of facts, so he continued quite sweetly:

"Who told the man to put the faces there, Frank?" And he turned his large blue eyes full upon his big brother's face, and assumed a look of intense expectancy.

"Oh, some king or governor, I guess!" responded Frank hotly. But the undaunted Will was upon him again before he could place himself on guard.

"What made the king—or the governor—" said the sweet voice of Will, making its way with some difficulty over the long words, "want the faces put there, Frank?"

"Oh, shut up!" cried Frank, glaring down from the height of his fourteen years upon this infantile interviewer. "You're enough to drive a saint mad! Here comes grandpa. You better load him up with questions!"

Will smiled as sweetly as before, loosened

his hold of Frank's hand, and, running swiftly to meet the colossal figure now advancing toward them, threw his tiny arms around one of its huge legs and clung there laughing.

"Grandpa Drubal!" cried the child. "Grandpa Drubal! Tell me why those strange faces were put up there on the wall? Frank don't know, or else he won't tell me."

At this moment Frank came up and managed to whisper in Will's ear: "You ought to be thrashed for that, and I guess you will be when I catch you alone."

But Will's courage did not flag in presence of this dreadful threat. "Grandpa Drubal!" he persisted, "can't you tell? Don't you know?"

The colossus stooped, and, gently disengaging the boy's clinging hands, took the small figure tenderly in his arms.

"Why, no, Will, I can't tell ye jest this minute," he said, in a deep voice which rumbled and rolled like distant, retiring thunder. "But I've got a red-covered book to home that will tell us all about it. Come—come in! Don't ye want nothin' to eat to-day,

ye poor leetle pirates? Ben waitin' half an hour fur ye. An' I could eat a load of hay an' the oxen, too, I reckon."

Their way to the modest hotel in the Rue de Castiglione in which Grandpa Drubal had installed the little party took them past the very face on the wall which had so terrified Will when he first saw it.

The horror was still in the stony eyes; the mocking smile still hovered about the moveless lips.

"Grandpa, that face up there makes me feel all creepy," said Will, giving it a timid glance over the old man's shoulder.

The colossus made no answer, but gave Will a comforting hug.

As they passed out of the silent Place Vendôme a great flood of sunshine fell from the blue sky, and for a full minute enveloped them in its glory. Grandpa Drubal's face was sad, and bore traces of deep mental suffering. But his brow cleared as the magnificent light transfigured sky and air and sculptured walls and white, shining roadways, and a smile flitted across his lips. He turned, with

little Will nestled in his strong arms, and stood for a few minutes at the corner of the historic Place, gazing at the splendid scene, and now and then calling Frank's attention in a low voice to things which struck his fancy.

In the central portion of glittering modern Paris the historical Place Vendôme, with its low palaces crowned with squat, Mansard roofs, and its broad sidewalks leading past wide carriage doorways, in which *concierges* in livery stand, consequential and dignified as soldiers on parade, looks ill at ease, and as if it regretted its vanished occupants of long ago.

The brilliant Rue de la Paix, a street filled with the shops of diamond merchants, dressmakers, and milliners, and with staid and stately hotels, the renown of which dates from the days of postilions and post-chaises, runs from this curious Place Vendôme to the great boulevards, the main artery of Parisian circulation. The Rue de Castiglione also leads out of the Place at a point directly opposite the Rue de la Paix to the trim and elegant Rue de Rivoli, with its gray arcades and its

bewitching outlook upon the garden of the Tuileries.

All these noble streets, celebrated for their massive elegance, are usually thronged with carriages and pedestrians during the winter and spring months of the fashionable season.

But on that soft and pleasant March morning of 1871 there was little, if any, movement in the streets. Few carriages appeared in the Rue de la Paix; pedestrians passed hurriedly with anxious air, glancing timidly at the entrance to the Place as if they expected to see something extraordinary there.

At the upper end of the Place stood a few cannon, pointed so as to command the Rue de la Paix. Behind them a dozen shabbily-attired soldiers were wearily pacing to and fro. Grandpa Drubal put on his glasses and took a good look at these men, whom he noticed now for the first time.

"Frank!" he said, with a little tremor of excitement in his voice, "your eyes are better than mine. Haven't those men over there got a red flag?"

The boy answered promptly: "Yes, sir,

they have. I noticed it, and was going to ask you about it. You know they told us in Bordeaux that the red flag is the banner of the Commune. But those must be government troops there, mustn't they, grandpa? For they act as if they owned the Place. Yet they've got a red flag, and it is waving right over the cannon. Just beyond the Napoleon column there. See!"

"Catamounts and kangaroos!" ejaculated Grandpa Drubal. "I should say I do see—a great deal more than I want to." He glanced at little Will, whose head had fallen heavily on his shoulder.

"Come, Frank," he said sharply, "let us go to the hotel quickly and get something to eat. Then I reckon we'd better shift our quarters."

"Why, Grandpa Drubal?" said Frank, catching the excitement and feeling a little tremor in his young breast. "They say there can't be any more fighting. The *concierge* at our hotel says the Communists are all cowards and will run away at——"

"There, there, Frank! Stir your steps!"

And Grandpa Drubal moved off as swiftly as if his age had been thirty instead of more than sixty.

Their hotel was in the Rue de Castiglione, and as they were leaving the Place Vendôme and entering that fine old street, the sunlight died away and the shadows fell like a pall.

At the same time the street became black with rows of silent men, dressed in rough, serviceable uniforms, and wearing caps which reminded Grandpa Drubal of Civil War times at home.

So suddenly did these men appear that one might have fancied them to have sprung out of the ground. Frank rubbed his eyes and tried to persuade himself that it was a dream.

But a moment later he was rudely jostled, and found it a stern reality. These anxious citizen soldiers were pouring out of the Rue Saint Honoré, the Rue du Mont Thabor, and the Rue de Rivoli, and moving rapidly, in obedience to some general order, to the Place Vendôme.

They carried their guns awkwardly. Some of them were prematurely old men, who

looked as if they had been overworked from infancy; some were great, overgrown fellows with bushy hair, who smoked short wooden pipes and swore strange oaths which, fortunately, Grandpa Drubal and his *protégés* could not understand.

Many had delicate and refined faces, and white hands which caressed their sword hilts, or the stocks of their rifles, as if their owners were anxious for a fray. Here and there was a vinous and bloated fellow, with bloodshot eyes and tipsy leer. All seemed for the moment impressed as with the solemnity of some great occasion; and they moved cautiously yet resistlessly onward, casting occasional glances upward at the windows of high houses, as if anticipating the sudden advent of bullets therefrom.

"Just so," thought Grandpa Drubal, rightly interpreting one of these glances. "The best thing that I can do is to get these boys in before the jig begins."

But he found it impossible to cross the street, which was now entirely blocked up by the oncoming masses. After waiting five

minutes, and seeing the interpreter of his hotel beckoning frantically from a balcony in the third story of their hostelry to make haste, he assumed an air of unconcern, and cautioning Frank to keep close beside him, he stepped forward and tried to break through the line.

He regretted it a moment later, when he found himself pushed back by two rough fellows with bloodshot eyes, who followed him to the curbstone, and said in concert, gruffly:

"Where are you going, citizen?"

This was all Greek to Grandpa Drubal, whose knowledge of foreign languages extended no farther than a smattering of Indian dialects, acquired during a short residence on the Southwestern frontier. But he saw that it was a question, so, waving his disengaged arm wildly, he said:

"Me American. Me go hotel. You sabe American? He heap good man."

On what theory Grandpa Drubal reposed his belief that it was necessary to talk broken English to foreigners it would be difficult to

discover. But the practice was successful. For one of the burly men said to the other, with an air of great condescension:

"Could'st thou understand the English, Anatole, thou would'st learn that the citizen is an American, from the land of liberty, and that he seeks his hotel." Then, turning to the men lumbering steadily past, he said, with a grand theatrical air and a pompous flourish of the hand:

"Citizens, I ask you to allow this son of liberty from free America, with his *protégés*, to pass through the lines to regain his hotel. In the name of liberty the Commune must accord all favor to the land of freedom? Open the ranks, citizens!"

"*Connu, ça!*" growled a white-faced man whose hands were scarred and seamed with traces of acids. "How do you know that the old boy is not a Prussian spy, and the two *momes* with him just for a blind? Hang on to him and have him examined, I say! Bring him into the Place, and I'll question him at the drum head!"

"No—no—no!" shouted a hundred voices.

"No use in seeing spies everywhere. We have work to do." Then a piping voice cried: "Let the old man pass through in peace if he will shout 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!'"

"You not comprehend?" said the citizen with the theatrical manners, turning to Grandpa Drubal.

"Not a blamed word," said that gentleman, who was beginning to get angry at the delay, and was anxious for the safety of the children.

At this juncture the white-faced man displayed a knowledge of English. He came up to Grandpa Drubal and said, with a sinister smile:

"You want get hotel before ze fight begin, you must cry loud,—ver' loud,—*Liberté! Egalité! Fraternité!* Zen ze citizen let you pass!"

"Oh, is that all!" said Grandpa Drubal, with a twinkle in his eye. "Why, they're good words enough, and I've no objection to sayin' 'em, though I can't get that switchback pronunciation of yours onto 'em. So here goes, citizens! And then you pass your road, I pass mine."

Standing erect and gripping the puzzled little Will, who was half ready to cry, with one hand, and taking off his broad felt hat with the other, Grandpa Drubal cried in a loud, clear voice: "Hurrah for Liberty, for Equality, for Fraternity! Come on, Frank, let's go to lunch!"

He put on his hat, and seizing Frank's hand, plunged toward the marching lines.

They parted to right and left, and some of the rough-looking men took off their caps and saluted the colossus. A dozen of them sent up a shout of "Adieu, Citizen!" but as Grandpa Drubal's ears were not attuned to the French form of those words, the politeness was entirely lost upon him.

"To the Place Vendôme! to the Place Vendôme! Let the aristos see that we are strong!" shouted the leaders.

And as Grandpa Drubal and the boys reached the *porte cochère* of their hotel they heard a tremendous roar of exultation, and, turning hurriedly around, they saw the red flag of the Commune—the terrifying symbol of the vast insurrection which was slowly

folding the mighty city in its deadly embrace —unfurled to float in the capricious March breezes.

"Oh, monsieur!" said the alarmed landlord, coming down three stairs at a bound to meet Grandpa Drubal and the boys, "we are under the crimson now, sure enough! May Heaven send its lightning upon them and their blood-red flag, or we shall all be murdered in our beds!"

"Wal, the murderin' don't seem to have begun yet," remarked Grandpa Drubal, "and I reckon we'll have time to take a bite. Here, Will, wake up and have something to eat."

"Monsieur is very calm," said the interpreter, coming in with a queer smile on his face. "And at such a moment! I envy monsieur! I saw the villains menacing monsieur. But monsieur was very brave. From the balcony I saw it all."

"Order some coffee, please, hot and strong," said Grandpa Drubal curtly. And the interpreter withdrew.

The long windows in the dining-room were open, and the noise of the clang of weapons,

the rumble of cannon wheels, the shouting and angry brawling of hundreds of men drifted in. The servants, with scared faces, glided in and out, noiselessly as ghosts.

"Whew!" said Grandpa Drubal, tugging at his cravat, "I feel as I always feel at home just before a roaring and booming thunder-shower breaks loose!"

CHAPTER II.

THE COMMUNE STRIKES HOME.

GRANDPA DRUBAL was the affectionate appellation given to Mr. Hasdrubal J. Corners, a prominent citizen of St. Joseph, Mo., by his grandsons, Frank and Will.

Sixty-two years had left their traces in abundant wrinkles on the noble and rugged features of the strong man, who was six feet three in height, weighed 240 pounds, and had a fist like a sledge-hammer. Hasdrubal Corners was built of the stuff out of which they make grand pioneers, prudent yet daring sea captains, and conquering generals.

Fate made him a pioneer and sent him into the Southwest.

Born among the granite hills of New Hampshire, something of the unyielding strength of his native State had got into his moral as well as his physical constitution.

He passed unscathed through the contagion

of the frontier. If the rough life had left upon his speech some traces of its contact, it had done him no harm in other particulars. Hasdrubal Corners—"General Corners," as he was universally called in the Southwest—was a man "to tie to," as his own people aptly phrased it.

When he settled in the handsome town of "St. Jo," and built a fine mansion for himself, his son, and the new wife whom that son had brought from the East, it looked as if General Corners were to spend the declining years of his life in peace and simple joys.

But he had one trouble which preyed upon his soul. That trouble was his son.

Almon Corners was a man of thirty before he showed signs of instability of character. Then he gave way to drink and drugs.

For a time he rallied, but suddenly his charming young wife, the mother idolized by Frank and Will, was taken away.

This was but a year after the birth of little Will, and the stroke fell heavily upon the two men left with the boys in the great white mansion among the trees. Almon Corners re-

lapsed, drew upon himself the reprobation of his father and the community, and after two or three years disappeared without explanation, leaving the two little boys to their grandfather's care.

Grandpa Drubal was rich, and lavished his affection and his money upon Frank and Will. Entirely devoted to their happiness, he could have been happy himself had not his heart bled for his wayward son.

One day early in 1870 a letter with a foreign postmark met his gaze as he seated himself at the breakfast table. It was dated at Bordeaux, in France, and was a piteous appeal from his son Almon for a large sum of money to save him from impending trouble and disgrace.

There was not a line to indicate what the writer's course had been since he had deserted his home ; not a word as to his intentions for the future. The erring father sent his love to Frank and Will, and added : "I know that they are well cared for, and are better off than with their good-for-nothing father."

Hasdrubal Corners gritted his teeth when he

read this letter. But he sent more money than was asked, and an entreaty to his son to come home, be forgiven, and redeem his manhood.

After anxiously awaiting an answer for some months, he began systematic enquiries as to his son's whereabouts. He finally discovered, through the consul at Bordeaux, that Almon Corners had been employed in a wine exporting house there; was dissipated and "badly noted," and had left for Paris, where he could perhaps be found by a careful search. "But Paris," added the consul in his polite note, "is like the ocean. You may pass almost within hailing distance of your dearest friend and never know it."

Hasdrubal Corners now felt drawn toward Europe and Paris. He determined to take his grandsons with him, place them in good schools, and then devote his time to hunting for his son.

Just as he was on the point of starting for Europe the Franco-Prussian war broke out. He waited impatiently for its close. But when January of 1871 arrived, and the French cannon still thundered defiance at the Teu-

tonic besieger, he hastened to New York with Frank and Will, and took passage for England, whence they went to Bordeaux.

Various explanations, which amounted to nothing save to determine that Almon Corners had not improved while in Bordeaux, kept the old man in that city until the middle of March.

Then he learned that the war was virtually at an end, and he departed for Paris with the boys, arriving there on the day of the outbreak of the Commune.

But, as he heard the insurrection laughed at as "abortive" and "likely to finish in a few days" by the English-speaking persons with whom he came in contact, he gave it little thought.

Now it had come to his very door, and was thrusting its crimson flag in his face. What if new horrors were to come—if civil war, gaunt and terrible, should stalk among the poor people who had hardly yet recovered from the hunger of the siege?

Grandpa Drubal was thinking of these things, and of his recreant absent son, as he sat in a French imitation of an Ameri-

can rocking-chair in the long dining-room, which was now deserted by all save himself and Frank. Little Will had been stowed away for an afternoon nap in the bedroom where the two boys slept beside their grandfather; and Frank was taking observations of the Place Vendôme from behind an orange tree in a huge blue box in the dining-room balcony.

Grandpa Drubal heard Frank's shrill voice once or twice, but he fancied that the boy was talking with the interpreter, "Jean Vercingetorix Durand," an imposing personage with a wax complexion, high cheek bones, oblique eyes, almost Chinese in appearance, and long, drooping, jet-black mustaches overhanging a pair of malicious-looking red lips.

"Jean Vercingetorix Durand! Great snakes! what a name!" murmured Grandpa Drubal; and then his head went wig-wag, and his eyes closed sleepily, and he drew a long breath. "Not now, Almon, boy; not another cent, now, till you reform."

It was in thinking of his absent, erring son that Grandpa Drubal had fallen asleep.

. . . . .

Suddenly he awoke with a great start, and found himself standing in the middle of the long room, trembling violently, and reaching out his hands. A presentiment of trouble flitted through his mind. He felt weak and old for a moment.

Stepping to the table, he was pouring out a glass of wine when he heard Frank shouting excitedly and apparently in some alarm:

"Grandpa Drubal! Grandpa! Why don't you come and see this, and tell me what it means? It looks dreadful—as if they were going to shoot all these people. Do come! I've been yelling at you for five minutes!"

The old man rubbed his eyes and hastened to the long window, which, like all windows in France, swung open like two folding doors, and gave access to the roomy balcony overhanging the street.

"I have been napping," he thought, "and it was Frank's shouting that woke me up."

He found Frank running back and forth in high excitement and listening to the voluble explanations of the interpreter, who seemed strangely moved by the scene. The cheeks of

Jean Vercingetorix Durand were flushed, his eyes flashed as if he were engaged in combat, and his mien was defiant.

"Look, grandpa," said Frank, seizing the old man's hand and urging him forward to the edge of the balcony. "You can see everything in the Place Vendôme from here as well as if you were hanging over it in a balloon. That's what Jean says, and it is true, isn't it?"

"Wal, it does look that way. But what ails the critter? He's all worked up," said Grandpa Drubal, pointing to the interpreter, who was leaning over the railing, shaking his clenched fist and muttering strange words which sounded like oaths. Once or twice he raised both hands above his head and gave a mighty shout.

"He's cracked," whispered the old man. "The excitement of to-day is too much for him."

"See, grandpa," said Frank, without noticing the last remark, "Jean has explained it all to me. You notice that great crowd of nicely dressed people moving up there? Well,

that's the Rue de la Paix. Near the entrance to the Place—Vahndôme, Jean calls it,"—Frank made a face at the French pronunciation—"there's ever so many thousands of them. See—men and ladies—waving their parasols—and children—fluttering their handkerchiefs. Jean says that they are trying to persuade the Communists to give up the insurrection and go home. Look! Look! they are flourishing their canes and parasols again! Oh! what was that? It sounded like a shot!"

Jean Vercingetorix Durand was clinging to the balcony now, gazing down at the animated throngs with a fixed, ferocious stare frightful to contemplate.

Grandpa Drubal noticed it, and remembered long afterward how much it resembled the look of a tiger about to spring upon its prey.

"A shot! It was a shot!" said Grandpa Drubal, and he instantly became alert and vigorous. "Frank, run up to my bedroom and bring down my big field-glasses! We'll get at the rights o' this! Don't wake up little Will: let him sleep as long as he can; as we may have to move this evening."

Frank ran to obey, and Grandpa Drubal, approaching Jean Vercingetorix Durand, tapped him on the shoulder and remarked:

"You appear to be much interested in yonder scrimmage."

The interpreter turned haughtily around. "I am witnessing the triumph of the people, as the citizen sees," he said. "Does the citizen like the picture?"

"Oh, you're one of 'em, are you?" said the old man, grimly surveying him. "A full-fledged Communist, hey? Why, I heard you calling them all pirates and cowards not twelve hours ago."

"Citizen, one must be prudent. But now the hour has come! Look down there, citizen, and you will see the blow struck which will deliver the city into our hands. Those richly dressed ladies and gentlemen there are fools. They think they have but to say, 'Disperse, citizens!' and we disperse. But let the citizen watch, and he will see——"

"Murder and riot, perhaps. Hey? Is that what you mean?" said Grandpa Drubal, turning away in disgust.

Close behind the orange-tree box he came upon Frank, his hands empty, his cheeks ashen pale, his eyes starting from their sockets.

"Why, where's the glasses, boy? Wha-what's the matter?"

"Oh, grandpa!" said Frank chokingly, "Will isn't up there! His bed is empty. I hunted for him all around, but I can't find him. What if something dreadful——"

Grandpa Drubal felt as if an iron hand were placed upon his heart strings. But he tried to be brave.

The image of the sweet-faced, blue-eyed, rosy-cheeked little fellow of six, with his bird-like pertness and quickness of movement, and his insatiable curiosity, rose before him. He caught Frank by the shoulder. "Run and look again! I'll call the servants!"

"Grandpa," said Frank solemnly, "I don't believe there's a soul in the house but us. I ran downstairs; the doors are wide open, but there's no one in the offices, and the street is as still as death."

"I'll go myself," said Grandpa Drubal, with a groan.

Five minutes later he came back with a face whiter than Frank's. "He's gone!" he said in a broken voice. "My little lamb! And I am to blame."

Hardly knowing what he was doing, he strode up to Jean Vercingetorix Durand, and, seizing him by the shoulder, shook him violently.

"Do you hear?" he said fiercely. "One of my little grandsons has strayed away, and it is all due to your carelessness. Do you understand?" he roared, giving the fellow a final shake and push, which sent his back against the orange tree.

The interpreter looked fixedly at Grandpa Drubal for a half minute while regaining his breath. "What is the safety of one child, citizen," he said coldly, "at such a moment as this, when the fate of a city, a nation, hangs trembling in the balance?"

"If you say that again, you speckled steer!" roared Grandpa Drubal, who had all the Southwestern touchiness, "I'll—I'll smash ye!"

"As for the little one, citizen," continued

the interpreter, readjusting his cravat, "there he goes now, making for the Place Vendôme, as fast as his legs will carry him. If I were the citizen, I would hasten to rescue him, for there may be a battle in the Place in the next few minutes." And again he smiled his evil smile.

Grandpa Drubal's heart seemed to leap into his throat. He looked, and there indeed was little Will, straying unconcernedly across the deserted Rue de Castiglione, and making straight for the crowded Place Vendôme, where the shouting and shrieking were momentarily growing louder.

"Oh, grandpa, I'll bet he's going to see those old faces again! He seemed to take a great fancy to 'em. But if he goes in there he may be killed."

"Ketch a holt on me, Frank," said his grandfather, dropping into the vernacular in his excitement. "I kain't afford to lose you, too. Now, let's run for it, and get the leetle feller before he is in mischief."

Neither ever knew how he got downstairs; they remembered that they had shouted to

Will before leaving the balcony, and that he had not heard them, but had gone steadily forward. When they reached the street, Will had disappeared in the Place Vendôme.

The old man uttered a cry of dismay, but sped on, Frank flitting lightly beside him. Into the Place they rushed, scarcely noticing that two stout soldiers were rapidly erecting a barricade on the side of the Rue de Castiglione opposite to them.

Will was not to be seen. Grandpa Drubal was peering into the crowd of Communists grouped around the Napoleon column in the centre of the square, thinking that the child might have gone there, when the sound of sharp, rattling volleys of musketry rang forth.

Then came a chorus of shrieks, frantic cries, curses, prayers, and pleas for mercy strangely commingled.

Clear and high above all rang the wail of a woman.

The blue-black uniformed soldiers who were massed around the column broke into little groups and pressed back toward the Rue de Castiglione. The old man and Frank were

caught in this retreating mass and hurried helplessly hither and yon. Then there was a rush forward; and a second rattling volley.

Grandpa Drubal saw a tri-color flag go down at the entrance to the Rue de la Paix, and the crimson banner go up in its place.

Now came a great beating of drums. All the Communists rushed forward, and Grandpa Drubal found himself kneeling very near a restive horse's heels, and slowly pulling poor little Will out of the dangerous neighborhood of the fiery creature.

Yes, it was Will, in a dead faint and apparently with one arm broken. He had been thrown down, and his arm had been trampled on by hurrying feet.

But he was alive, and Grandpa Drubal hugged him to his breast as closely as he dared, remembering the injured arm, and Frank danced about like a wild boy and called Will all the pet names he could think of.

"Let's run for it, grandpa," said Frank; "we may get shot here."

"The battle seems over, Frank." And the old man stood gazing spellbound, for half

a minute, on the ghastly scenes before him. Frank held his breath and looked too, and a curious feeling of cold crept along his spine.

Five minutes ago the Rue de la Paix had been packed with richly attired men and women, adjuring the Communists to retire from the Place Vendôme.

Now not a living person was to be seen in the whole broad street.

But just opposite the entrance to the Place lay a ghastly heap of dead bodies, and round about them the white stones were red with blood.

A woman's pallid face, with widely opened eyes, startled Frank as he gazed on this terrible scene. The woman's white hand was extended in a little pool of blood, and the dead fingers seemed to clutch at the pavement.

"Come, Frank," said Grandpa Drubal, holding little Will gently, and blowing in his face in the hope of reviving him. "Home, quick! Run ahead and get the camphor out of my valise!"

As he hurried through the Place he found himself challenged. A barricade was already

erected, and he and Frank had to go through a very narrow exit. Luckily, none of the noisy men whom he had met a few hours before were there. In response to the sentinel's challenge he held up little Will.

"*Mon Dieu!* the child is dead!" said the sentinel of the Commune, mistaking the fainting fit for death. He took off his cap, and the rough men on the barricade followed his example.

"Pass on, citizen!" said the sentinel.

CHAPTER III.

CITIZEN JEAN IS CALLED.

"A SECOND siege, Frank! That's what it means!" said Grandpa Drubal, in a troubled voice, looking over his gold-bowed spectacles at the boys.

Frank withdrew his arm from beneath little Will's shoulder, laid his brother's head gently on the great square French pillow which might almost have served as a mattress for the child, then turned an eager pair of eyes, in which bright tears were glistening, full upon his grandfather.

"Oh, Grandpa Drubal!" he said tremulously, "what if we had lost him?"

The old man made no answer for a full minute. He looked hastily from one boy to the other, as if he feared that some misfortune might take them away from him. Then he sat down in a great arm-chair and opened wide his arms.

Frank sprang into them, as he had done when a little boy. But an instant later he extricated himself from the old man's loving embrace and stood erect, vigorous, with flashing eyes, gazing down from the wide window into the balconied and yellowish-white walled street.

"Grandpa Drubal," he said, "I wish I was a man!"

"Time enough! Time enough, Frank! Grown-up folks have many troubles! But what is the reason for your hurry now?"

"I'd like to be a man so that I could help to punish those villains who shot those women in the Place. Don't you think that was cowardly, Grandpa Drubal?"

"Of course it was, boy, of course! But the soldiers were ordered to shoot, and they had to do it, I reckon."

"Then if little Will had been in the way, they would have shot him, too?"

Grandpa Drubal was so distressed at this suggestion that he was about to suspend the conversation, when a weak treble voice from the big pillow said:

"They wouldn't 'a' shot me, I bet you! I'd just scrooched down and let the bullets fly over me."

"Now you have done it, Frank!" said his grandfather reproachfully. "Just as Will was dropping off to sleep!"

"Grandpa Drubal," said the small voice, "why did the men shoot all those nice people?"

"Because they thought they were going to be attacked by the soldiers, who were to rush in after the men and women had persuaded them to lay down their guns," interposed Frank. "That's what Jean the interpreter says."

"Pshaw!" said Will, with the gravity of an elderly diplomat. "I don't believe that. It sounds like a poor excuse."

Grandpa Drubal's eyes twinkled. "I reckon you aint dead yet, Will," he said. "You seem to have lots of good sense left."

"I think they shot those poor people so as to scare everybody else," continued Will; "then they could have their own way. If I hadn't fell down, grandpa," he added, after a

long sigh, "I might have seen as much of the fight as you and Frankie did. I wish I wasn't so little!"

Will always spoke very distinctly and "used the best words," as his grandfather said. The good lady who had watched over his progress from the moment when he began to talk was very precise, and Will had copied her manner and her speech. This gave a quaint finish to his charming little personality.

"Now, Will," said Frank soothingly, "you said you would go to sleep if I would sing 'Old Jim Crow,' and I sung it, and——"

"All right!" said Will, settling back into the pillow. "But, honor bright, now, if there is any more shooting, you call me, Frankie, won't you? If it's a real, good fight, I mean —not just a skirmish, you know, but a first-class——"

The wee voice grew fainter and fainter. Grandpa Drubal sat listening, with a pleased smile on his face, to the child's regular breathing. But presently he heard the "Ta-ra-tan-ta-ras" of a corps of buglers, and a grim wrinkle came into his brow.

"Frank," he said, starting up, "where on earth do all these fellows come from? Do they turn the paving stones into Communists?"

They went to the window together and watched the passage of a dozen battalions of pale, hungry, overworked-looking men, neatly dressed in the uniforms of the French National Guard, and well armed with muskets and short swords.

At their head marched a huge fellow who looked as if he were a butcher by trade. His jaunty cap was perched on a tumbled mass of hair which fell in a cascade upon his thick neck. Around his waist a blood-red scarf was wound, and from it peeped a pair of large pistols.

"Jean says that there are two hundred thousand men like that, all armed and anxious to fight," said Frank. "He says that they are going to march on Versailles, where the Government folks are, and that, when they have taken that place, France will rise and join with Paris!"

"He does, eh?" said Grandpa Drubal dryly.

"He didn't tell ye, I reckon, that the regular Gov'ment is bound to besiege these fellows in Paris, and that this town will have to go through a second siege, maybe, worse than the Prussian one?"

"No, grandpa, he don't believe that, I know. He thinks the Commune is bound to win, and he says that the people are right to rise and take vengeance after being kept down so long."

"The dog he does!" said the old man scornfully. "A second siege!" he repeated, and fell to musing.

Grandpa Drubal was meditating on the dangers to which his two young charges might be exposed if they remained in Paris. But could they leave the city? A moment's reflection convinced him that they could, since the Prussians had occupied the Northern Railway's line, and held it with a strong force for their own protection. As neutrals, he and his grandsons could probably pass out. Perhaps it would be the wisest plan.

Little Will was fast asleep. Grandpa Drubal led Frank into the small drawing-

room which opened out of the bed chamber, and was about to tell him that they would try to leave that night, when there was a knock at the door, and without waiting for an invitation, Jean Vercingetorix Durand, the interpreter, strode in.

He was dressed in the uniform of a National Guard, and seemed proud of his long coat, white gaiters, low cap, with jaunty visor, and belt for side arms.

In one hand he held his gun, rather gingerly, as if he were a bit afraid of it.

His demeanor was solemn. It had a tinge of ferocity.

Grandpa Drubal instinctively placed Frank behind him as this newly uniformed warrior came in, and he took a step or two forward, as if to be ready for action.

"Citizen," said the interpreter, "I don't bear any malice for that little thing yesterday. We were both very much excited. We call that—how you say in English—off. Am I right, citizen?"

Grandpa Drubal reflected. "I was a leetle rough yesterday, I reckon, Mr.——"

"Citizen, if you please." Jean raised his cap and made a bow.

"Well, Citizen Jean, I was rough with ye, and I ask your pardon. Shake. You see I was worried about the boy, and——"

Jean Vercingetorix Durand took Grandpa Drubal's honest palm in his dark-colored, bony hand for an instant, then let it fall, as if afraid of it. "I am glad the child is better," he said. "The arm is not badly hurt?"

He spoke English correctly, but with a kind of tum-tum-tum accent which fell unpleasantly upon Grandpa Drubal's nerves.

"No. Horse stepped just so's to pinch the flesh and make a bad bruise. No other harm, thank God! But it was a perilous moment, I tell ye!"

"There is peril everywhere just now, citizen," said Jean, rolling his oblique eyes, and letting his gaze rove round the room, as if taking an inventory of the traveller's possessions. "Peril in the air. Peril under the earth. Peril in the walls of the houses. Peril on every hand, citizen!"

He drew from a breast pocket a folded paper and showed it to Grandpa Drubal.

"This is my summons," he cried. "I join the great insurrection! I melt into the mass, citizen! I toil for Liberty, Equality, Fraternity! Let me read you my call."

Frank and his grandfather drew near and glanced curiously at the letter, which was dated the previous day.

It had a blue seal, stamped with these words: "Central Committee of the National Guard," and the contents of the missive were as follows:

"CITIZEN:

"The National Guard counts upon you. As the circumstances are grave, its Central Committee now holds permanent sittings at No. 11 Rue d'Onfroi. It awaits you with impatience.

"For the Central Committee, and by its order,

"THE SECRETARY-GENERAL."

When Jean had read this, in his neat translation, to Grandpa Drubal, that gentleman observed: "They seem to have got their claws on you, Mister——"

"Citizen, if you please."

"Citizen Jean. You don't want to undertake anything that you'll repent of, you know."

A savage flash came from the black eyes of Jean Vercingetorix Durand. "Citizen," he said, "there are two hundred thousand of us. We have weapons, ammunition, and twelve hundred cannon. We hold the richest city in the world in ransom. Our time has come. The confederated battalions of the National Guard have long waited for their hour, and it is here at last. And we mean to have what we want."

He let the butt of his gun fall noisily to the floor.

CHAPTER IV.

CITIZENESS MARCELLE.

A MOMENT later he seemed to regret that he had shown so much feeling. Then a cunning look stole into his face.

"I am surprised," he said, "that you Americans don't help us and sympathize with us. For we alone are right. The government, with its Kings and Emperors and laws and police, is wrong. Look, citizen, that is what we will do with the government!"

He tore a bit of paper from his letter and, with a whiff, blew it lightly into the air. It fluttered a moment, then floated down to the floor.

"That is the way that the old order will fall," said Jean Vercingetorix Durand. "But that was not what I came to say to you."

"I am glad to hear that," said Grandpa Drubal. "I——"

"I came here to say that you may need

protection. You may count on me, citizen, and if you will trust me, you may trust my wife still more. *La voici*, my wife."

Without asking permission, he opened the door and led in a tall, angular woman, of forbidding aspect.

Her face was thin, with high cheek bones. She had a long nose and a pair of little eyes which sparkled like those of a ferret. She looked so sharply at Grandpa Drubal that he felt uncomfortable.

"This is Marcelle, my wife," said the warrior-interpreter. "Citizeness Marcelle Cunégonde Durand, at your service."

Citizeness Marcelle nodded, and pulled her imitation Astrakan cape more closely around her bony shoulders. She was dressed in black and wore list slippers on her feet. On her glossy black hair reposed a plain white cap, on which was pinned a vivid red badge an inch long.

It looked like a blood stain.

Frank took an instinctive dislike to this woman, who did not deign to notice him.

"I go to battle. But Citizeness Marcelle

can stay and attend to your interests," pursued the interpreter. "Fortunately, she knows the English, for we lived in London some time, eh, Marcelle?"

The memories of this foreign residence did not seem agreeable to Marcelle, who frowned, and shot a sharp look at her husband.

But warned by a return glance of menacing character from her husband, she managed to smile and say: "Yes, citizen, we speak your beautiful language a little—ever so little. And if I can help the citizen and take care of the children, I shall do so gladly."

She raised her elbows, her shoulders, and eyes at once, as if appealing to Heaven to witness her sincerity. Then she let them all fall back to their natural position.

Grandpa Drubal looked carefully at the woman, and reflected. It was true that she might be of service to him in this strange situation. He was willing to oblige Jean Vercingetorix Durand, for something warned him not to make an enemy of the man.

"Well, citizeness," he said pleasantly, "we have two little boys here. One of them

got hurt yesterday, and may need motherly care at any time. Suppose you take a look at him?"

Marcelle nodded, and pulled nervously at her Astrakan cape. So Grandpa Drubal led the way into the bedroom, where Will lay sleeping soundly upon the pillow, his chubby white arms thrown back, and a sweet smile upon his cherubic face.

The woman bent over him and her breath came quickly. Her eyes glistened for an instant; then the light seemed to die out of them. "*C'est un petit amour!*" she murmured. "He is angel-ique. Who would not like to take care of such a pretty creature?"

"Ah, then it is understood!" cried Jean, pulling nervously at his long mustaches, and in his excitement carrying his rifle barrel so as to ensure his own instant demise in case the weapon should happen to go off. "Marcelle will stay and care for the children, while I go to battle. Is it not so, citizen? You shall make your own terms. The landlord's servants have all run away, and so have most of

the guests. But you are safe, under our protection."

"I reckon we can take care of ourselves, as far as safety goes," said the old man, a little sharply. The protection of Jean Vercingetorix Durand was, for some reason which he could not explain, disagreeable to him. "But if your wife, the citizeness, will stay here and help us out she shall be paid properly until we go, which will be in a few days."

Jean's face clouded. "Don't make that mistake, citizen," he said, "Stay and see the vengeance of the people. Stay and witness for free America that we are in the right, and that tyranny is at an end in France. *Au revoir*, Marcelle; I will see thee when we return victorious from Versailles. Look after the citizen's interests. Citizen, I salute you! Do not forget that you are watched over by the Confederated National Guard!"

And before Grandpa Drubal could stop him he had bounded out of the apartment and was rapidly descending the stairs.

Citizeness Marcelle took from her pocket a small, muddy-looking newspaper, and sitting

down in a corner fell to reading, as if she had been in the service of General Hasdrubal J. Corners all her life.

"Come down to the street door, Frank," said his grandfather. "This good woman will take care of Will's wants if he should wake up."

"Certainly, citizen," said Marcelle, "as if he were my own."

When they reached the street door the landlord was standing in it conversing with a tall, pleasant-faced man.

"Ah, here they are!" cried the landlord, and turning to Grandpa Drubal and Frank he said: "This gentleman is from the American Consulate. He wishes some fellow countrymen to accompany him to the Place Vendôme, where he is going to superintend the removal of an American who was shot there yesterday when the 'friends of order' tried to invade the place. He was just asking me if there were any Americans in the house when you——"

"Could you go with us?" said the pleasant-faced man. "Yes? You are very kind.

Don't take the boy, for it is a horrible spectacle!"

"Grandpa!" said Frank, stamping the ground in vexation, when he heard the last remark, "don't go without me!"

"Would you leave poor little Will alone with the citizeness, Frank?" said Grandpa Drubal, with that peculiar look in his eye which signified a demand for obedience. And Frank regretfully retraced his steps to the apartment, after learning that his grandfather would be absent but a short time.

The pleasant-faced man was the vice-consul. "This American who was shot appears to have been looking on, carelessly enough, like so many hundreds of others," he said. "As we are likely to see stormy times we thought it a good chance to show our flag, so that the insurrectionists will recognize and remember it. And I am obliged to you for accompanying me."

As they went along Grandpa Drubal told the vice-consul who he was, and about Will's adventure on the preceding day. But he did not say a word concerning his mission in

search of his lost son. A pang shot through his heart as he thought that possibly before this dread drama of the insurrection were over he might find that son lying dead, like the poor fellow whom they were going to see.

At the entrance to the Place Vendôme there was a small group of Americans awaiting the vice-consul. Four stout servants carried a bier, and a tall, blond man, who was pointed out to Grandpa Drubal as the consul, stepped to the front carrying a flag-staff wrapped in oilskin.

A servant cut the lashings, the consul made a quick movement, and there above the heads of the little company floated "Old Glory," with its stripes streaming in the wind and its stars sparkling in the keen March air. Then the small procession set forth, with the banner at its head.

The rough soldiers at the barricade cheered the flag, and an officer, who looked like the ringmaster in a circus, waved his silver spangled cap in the air and cried, "*alut Set Fraternité, citoyens!*" as they passed.

The interior of the square was littered with

bottles, which had been drained of their wine; with bread crusts, rinds of cheese, and fragments of meat. An open fire smouldered on the paving stones, and two or three hundred soldiers were seated around it.

Over the ancient, stately edifice from which the commander of the government garrison of Paris had so recently fled, a red flag was fluttering. A gawky sentinel with surly features was leaning in the doorway watching a painter, who was inscribing over the entrance, in bold, black letters, the words: "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité!"

The consul led his party across the square to the arched entrance of a long hall, in time of peace used for the lottery drawings which accompany the sale of city bonds in Paris.

A long row of rude shelves had been erected there, and on them the dead were placed, clothed just as they had fallen the day before.

The dead lady, whom Frank and his grandfather had seen lying with her white hand in a pool of blood, was there, with the same widely opened eyes. An old man, elegantly dressed, with a sweet smile on his pale face,

and a huge scarlet stain on his broad brow, lay with one hand pointing forward, as if indicating the murderer.

The soldiers had their caps off in the presence of death. Even the sentinel had placed his cap upon the point of his bayonet, and stood leaning over it, and studying the dead faces with a vague terror in his eyes.

Grandpa Drubal felt a sudden faintness when the consul paused before a body and said: "This is our poor countryman!" He looked quickly at the face. It was no one whom he had ever seen before.

Why had he feared that he might find his own wayward son there? He could not tell.

The flag was laid reverently upon the body, which was lifted upon the bier, and the servants bore the mournful burden away. Grandpa Drubal was following the others slowly out, after the vice-consul had signed a receipt for the body and had been called "Citizen Consul" a dozen times, when he was stopped by the light touch of a hand on his arm.

It was the bareheaded Communist sentinel, who looked him smilingly in the face, and said in English, with a strong French inflection :

"Why, General Corners, don't you remember me?"

CHAPTER V.

GRANDPA DRUBAL BECOMES FAMOUS.

GRANDPA DRUBAL knew the voice, and it so startled him that his own tones trembled as he answered, after taking a good look at the sentinel:

"Why, Jules Raisin, can this be you?"

"Can and is, citizen," said the sentinel, with a slight emphasis on the last word. "Soldier of the Confederated National Guard, who are masters of Paris, and in a few days will control France. Then France will drive the enemy from her soil, set up the old republic, and go on gloriously!"

Jules Raisin gave the military salute.

"Well," said Grandpa Drubal, "if France goes on as fast as you talk, she'll get somewhere right soon. But how is it that I find you in Paris, fighting in support of an insurrection, instead of shaving faces and cutting hair in St. Jo?"

The sentinel drew himself up haughtily. "We all have a right to our opinions," he said, in his curious, sharp accent, which made every word pop out of his mouth like water from the neck of a narrow flask. "When I had made some money by working at my trade in St. Jo for twelve years, I came home here to spend it. Well, I bought a little house in the country, about ten miles from Paris, and I had made up my mind to plant roses in my front garden, and cabbages and carrots in my back-yard, for the rest of my life, when along came the war with Germany. My house was occupied by the enemy, my furniture was ruined, my poultry and pigs were all eaten up, and the banker who had my funds ran away before the Prussians shut the Parisians in."

"You have been unlucky!"

"Then I fought through the war in my battalion of the National Guard. Things didn't go to suit us; we have always been suspicious that the Government would sell out our new republic to some King or Emperor, and so we have taken the matter into our own hands."

He glanced hurriedly around. Two old men

with bushy hair and rubicund features, and dressed as officers, were approaching.

"But not another word now! The officers are suspicious of everybody. They may punish me for speaking to you. Give me your address, and I will manage to see you soon. I wish I could have a look at those two fine grandsons of yours!"

"They are both here."

The sentinel showed his amazement by opening his eyes widely, pursing up his lips, and giving a prolonged whistle. "And their father?" he said gently.

Grandpa Drubal hung his head, which was a sufficient answer for Jules Raisin. Then the old man gave his address, and the sentinel told him an hour at which he could come on the following day. Grandpa Drubal hurried to rejoin the sad little procession, musing as he went along on the sudden changes of fortune which had brought the once prosperous barber of St. Joseph to the condition of a common soldier in an insurrection.

As soon as the old man had disappeared, one of the bushy-haired men stepped up to the

sentinel. "With whom were you talking?" he said sharply. "Beware how you tell idle tales to strangers."

"That is the great General Corners from America, citizen," said Jules Raisin, straightening up and giving the officer a shrewd look, in which amusement and malice were mingled. "The great General Corners. An old friend of mine. What would the citizen say if I should rally General Corners to the cause of the Commune?"

The bushy-haired man patted the sentinel on the back. "A brave idea, citizen!" he cried. "One which means promotion for you, or I am much mistaken. By the bones of Marat! We need sympathy. Bring the old American general to the Hôtel de Ville and let him see the enthusiasm of our battalions departing for Versailles. A noble idea, citizen!" And he strode pompously away.

. . . . .

A week passed without fresh bloodshed within the walls of Paris. The central quarters were tranquil, because, as Grandpa Drubal expressed it, "all the folks had gone away."

Fifty thousand people had fled after the massacre of the Place Vendôme; a hundred thousand women and children went out in long procession and scattered through the villages just out of reach of the Paris forts.

The Commune had been declared with theatrical ceremonies at the Hôtel de Ville. The Central Committee of the Confederated National Guard, which had been the creator of the insurrection, wanted its powers confirmed by an election.

It succeeded, but a formidable faction cast sixty thousand votes against it, and sowed the seeds of future discord.

On the evening after the election Grandpa Drubal received the following singular note, which disturbed him more than he would have liked to confess:

"THE EIGHTH GERMINAL.

"*Citizen Jean Vercingetorix Durand,*
"*On the field of battle:*
"*To Citizen Corners,*
"*Paris:*

"The Commune is declared.
"The Revolution is begun.

"The infamous Versaillists, anxious to restore monarchy, are marching upon Paris.

"But they will be vanquished.

"Should they succeed by treachery in entering the city, they will be blown into air.

"Petroleum and dynamite are our allies.

"If we perish, Paris shall perish with us.

"*Vive la Commune!*

"*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité!*

"Give Marcelle the news that her husband is battling bravely against tyrants.

"*Salut et fraternité,*

"JEAN VERCINGETORIX DURAND.

"At the front."

Certain phrases in this letter convinced Grandpa Drubal that the calm which at present so surprised everyone was but the lull preceding a fearful tempest.

He knew from a conversation with the vice-consul that M. Thiers and his generals were assembling great forces at Versailles, and that they would attack the Communists as soon as they could.

The vice-consul advised him to retire from Paris with his two young charges, but promised him, in case he decided to remain, such protection as he could afford. "How much that will amount to," he said, "in case

of actual fighting, and the invasion of houses by a furious soldiery, you can judge as well as I."

Grandpa Drubal remained, and it was Jules Raisin who had decided him to do so.

The Communist soldier had made many visits to the hotel, where he was hailed with delight by Frank, who had often been on excursions with him in the neighborhood of St. Jo.

Little Will had quite recovered now, and joined heartily in the frolics of his older brother with Raisin, whose frank manners and genial courtesy made his Communist uniform seem a disguise, rather than the livery of his opinions.

Jules Raisin was an eloquent talker, and he set himself at work to convince Grandpa Drubal that the Commune was right.

"We want the same liberties for Paris that American cities have always enjoyed," he said; "and we will fight to the death to secure them. America revolted against unjust government; we have done the same thing."

"Yes," said Grandpa Drubal, "but America

didn't raise the red flag; which means pillage and abolition of private property. What have you to say to that?"

"The flag of the revolution means protection for the rights of the people," said Jules Raisin hotly. "It will restore to the people such rights as were taken away from them. There are at present in the Bank of France a billion francs in coined money, a billion in gold and silver ingots, and a billion in paper money. There are deposits of jewelry, gold, and plate, belonging to ninety thousand families, in the same bank. Have we touched these treasures? Are we not guarding them safely? The men who are keeping watch over them do not get enough to eat daily. Must we be taken for robbers because we carry red flags stuck in the muzzles of our muskets?"

But such special pleading was without influence upon Grandpa Drubal.

When he saw the fingers of Citizeness Marcelle working with nervous energy, while Jules Raisin spoke of the treasures in the Bank of France, he maintained his old suspicions.

One day Jules Raisin persuaded him to hire a handsome iron-gray horse for himself, a pony for Frank, and to accompany him to the Hôtel de Ville, where the terrible "Central Committee" of the Commune had installed itself, and from which point it sent troops to the front as fast they could be put into shape.

It was a bright and beautiful April morning. The majestic arch of the blue sky was filled with genial sunshine, which sent earthward its brilliant rays to sparkle upon the grayish-white walls of palaces and mansions, convents and gardens.

Jules Raisin was transformed into a cavalryman for the nonce. But such a rider! Frank could not keep his face straight when he saw the little barber's wiry frame bobbing up and down on the back of a huge iron-gray horse, which was more accustomed to the task of drawing heavy omnibuses than to that of transporting fiery cavaliers.

"Where did you pick up that animal, Jules?" said Grandpa Drubal, biting his lips.

Citizen Jules was meditating a sharp answer when the big iron-gray bolted down the Rue

de Rivoli, into which they had just turned, and went clattering along, with Jules clinging to its neck, and bestowing on him all the wicked names in the calendar of the Communist.

By the time Frank, who was a fine horseman, had dashed up on his pony, and held the bridle long enough for Jules to scramble back to his place in the saddle, and for the ex-omnibus horse to compose himself, the barber-warrior had forgotten his answer.

But he managed to stammer: "Of course, I cannot ride as well as you Americans of the West, who are born in the saddle. And you must remember that I am an infantry man, and mounted to-day only to accompany you."

"Practice makes perfect," said Frank politely. "But don't go into battle on horseback just yet, unless the enemy rides as badly as you do."

"Pooh? Live and learn," said Jules. "The Commune has seized two or three thousand of these old omnibus nags. It proposes to put troopers on them, and so create cavalry."

"I think the horses would do better execution without the riders," said Grandpa Drubal. "Drive 'em in a herd against some of the infantry that I've seen, and dog me if they wouldn't carry the day!"

Jules Raisin was too busy holding on to the saddle to notice this criticism of the Communist foot soldiers. While they were talking they were passing the Palace of the Tuileries, melancholy and uninhabited, except by a few sour-featured guards, who looked hungry and aggressive.

Frank was a keen admirer of beautiful architecture, and his eyes roved with delight over the simple and severe, but impressive, lines of the great wings of the Tuileries.

The entrance to the vast courtyard was open. They rode in unchallenged, and, picking their way among ammunition wagons, cannon, heaps of half-spoiled provisions, and piles of clothing, they entered the grand inner court of the Louvre and feasted their gaze upon the superb stretches of colonnades and the lofty porticos ornamented with the statues of heroes.

"And to think," said Jules Raisin, making a sweeping gesture which included the Palace of the Tuileries and the vast museum, with its priceless collection of works of art, "that if the Versaillists get in here, and we have to protect our line of retreat, all these beautiful things must go up in smoke!"

Grandpa Drubal made no answer. But as he thought of certain phrases in the strange letter which he had that day received from Citizen Durand, he shuddered.

He felt convinced that the vindictive spirit of the people, if Jean Vercingetorix Durand was a good type of the mass, was strong enough to leave Paris in ruins rather than to surrender it hastily.

Frank was fresh from a course of reading in French history, and as they resumed their journey to the Hôtel de Ville he told his grandfather the story of the invasion of the palace by the mob in June of 1792, and how the people had insulted and menaced the king and forced him to put on a red Phrygian or liberty cap.

"See," cried Jules Raisin, "there is one of

the same caps in color and form now, on the head of that woman trundling a barrowful of vegetables over there!" and he pointed to the opposite side of the street.

The woman seeing that she was observed, took off the emblem of revolution, flourished it in the air, crying in a hoarse voice, "*Vive la Commune! Vive la Revolution Socialé!*"

"She looks a little like Citizeness Marcelle," said Grandpa Drubal slyly. And at that moment—he could not tell why—a pang of self-accusation at the thought that he had left Will in the care of that singular woman shot through his breast.

Yet he remembered that she seemed to love the child, and was never tired of ministering to his comfort.

The landlord, who sat all day in his little office near the street door of his hotel, had promised that Will should never leave the hotel alone, and he would keep his word. "No; I am wrong to distress myself," murmured Grandpa Drubal. And he turned his attention to the novel scene on the great

square in front of the Hôtel de Ville, where they arrived just as a committee of the Commune was sending several battalions to the front.

Jules Raisin spurred his animal as much as he dared. Frank and Grandpa Drubal rode up gallantly and took places near the little knot of mounted officers, who were all uniformed in the most fantastic manner.

While Frank studied the beauties of the Hôtel de Ville, which he now saw for the first time, Grandpa Drubal critically examined the troops in line, and made up his mind that they could not stand before regulars. He had had a wide experience of citizen soldiery in the Civil War, when he had campaigned with the Union forces in Missouri, and his title of general was perhaps better deserved than the military rank of any man in the mass which he at that moment overlooked.

"They won't stand, Frank," he said. "They would be fierce enough in rough-and-tumble fighting, but in a regular battle I wouldn't give them two chances out of ten."

At this instant Grandpa Drubal saw that

Jules Raisin had been joined by a mounted officer with a red sash worn transversely on his breast, and that the officer was intently watching him.

He looked at Frank, who pursed up his lips to indicate that silence would be prudent.

"What was the general saying?" asked the Communist officer, addressing Jules Raisin, and at the same time politely saluting Grandpa Drubal, who sat, grim and military of port, erect upon his horse.

"General Corners was remarking," answered Jules Raisin, in French, of which neither Frank nor Grandpa Drubal understood more than a word now and then, "that the men before him are finished models of citizen-soldiers, fit to do battle against the finest regulars in the world."

The Communist officer flushed with pride, saluted again, talked rapidly, saying "Ge-neral Cor-naire" every five seconds, and adding "A-me-ri-cain," at which Grandpa Drubal bowed and smiled.

Then the officer galloped to the front of the

troops, and, standing up in his stirrups, shouted out to them a speech, of which the substance was that a distinguished general from that land of liberty—the United States—was present, and had expressed his unshaken belief that the soldiers before him could drive the Versaillist regulars off the face of the earth. Whereupon there was a wild cheer, and cries of "*Vive le General Americain! Vive l'Amerique!*" and the men waved their gun-barrels, each one of which had a miniature red flag stuck in it.

"What did he say about me?" enquired Grandpa Drubal, rather suspiciously, as the officer stopped speaking.

Jules Raisin told him exactly what the officer had said, and there was a little twinkle in his eye as he did so.

Grandpa Drubal made no comment. But Frank leaned down over his pony's mane, and said, under his breath:

"Pretty cold cheek, I call that, on Raisin's part!"

And now a singular procession came down the steps of the vast, picturesque edifice so

intimately connected with the history of the revolutions of Paris.

It was a long line of worried-looking, rather unkempt men, dressed in black, each with a blood-red sash about his waist.

With a dazed and weary air, as if he had not slept for a week, the leader of this procession of delegates from the terrible "Commune" made his way to the line of troops, and began kissing the officers on their cheeks and shaking hands with the men, while the troops cheered.

The official's comrades soon began to imitate his example, and Grandpa Drubal, bursting out with:

"Come, Frank, I can't stand this!" was cantering away, when he observed Jules Raisin giving a hint to some of the officers, and a moment later cries of "*Vive le General Cornaire! Vive l'Amerique!*" were once more heard.

Grandpa Drubal frowned, but Frank noticed that his back was straighter than usual, and that he cocked his hat a little to one side as they rode away.

The Commune, in its "Official Journal" of that day, published the rather exaggerated statement that several distinguished American generals had called at the Hôtel de Ville to express their sympathy with the cause of the "Social Revolution."

From the Hôtel de Ville the trio took a long ride up the Champs Elysées to the Triumphal Arch, where Jules Raisin had to leave them to go back to his post, and watched the defile of infantry and artillery on the way to the "field of battle," as Citizen Durand called it.

Suddenly the thunder of cannon was heard —deep, terrible, menacing—beyond the hill of Courbevoie, and the great throng watching the troops sent up an angry shout.

CHAPTER VI.

BATTLE AND DISASTER.

IT was a grand experience for a boy of fourteen.

Frank's pulses beat wildly as he looked on the vast crowd assembled at the Triumphal Arch to witness the departure of the Communist troops for their first important battle.

Boy though he was, he could fully appreciate the strange character of the scene.

Clustered around the magnificent Arch, seated in landaus or victorias, mounted on elegant horses, or standing on the broad sidewalks, were at least forty thousand ladies and gentlemen, most of whom belonged to the aristocratic classes against which the Commune had set its harsh face and raised its crimson banner.

They were laughing and chatting, and now and then they jeered openly at some poor Communist, awkward enough in his uniform,

and clinging desperately to his insecure seat on an artillery wagon.

Frank wondered that these people could have the courage to do this, after the terrible experience of the "party of order" on the day of the massacre in the Place Vendôme, and he asked Grandpa Drubal what it meant.

"Mean, my boy! It means that the rich people think the Commune is going to encounter defeat out there! And I think so, too! Why, if those fellows meet regular troops, they'll be eaten up, I tell ye!"

"Sh—grandpa!" said Frank, for he saw sharp eyes fixed on the old man, and Jules Raisin had already told him that the newly elected Commune had its spies everywhere, and was especially fond of arresting foreigners.

Grandpa Drubal looked keenly at Frank for a moment.

"Afraid to hear the old man speak his mind, be ye?" he said. "Wal, I guess the American flag is big enough to cover us, if anybody wants to tackle us for expressing our sentiments. I say those fellows won't fight, Frank, not after the first brush!"

But while thus defiantly repeating his opinion, he could not help feeling uncomfortable. A sense of his own helplessness, surrounded by the waves of this insurrection, overcame him for the moment.

He was roused from this mood by a tremendous shout, which seemed to shake the very Arch. It was one vast outcry of amazement, fear, and exultation. After it arose a chorus of feminine shrieks and scornful laughter. Then the crowd began to press backward and away from the Arch.

"See, Grandpa Drubal!" cried Frank, "Look at those great white things in the sky! Aren't they bombshells? Oh, look at that one! How fast it grows big! And there's another! Grandpa, isn't it grand?"

The old man brought his horse close up to Frank's pony, and, leaning down, said in the low, deep tones which he always assumed when he meant to have the boys obey instantly: "Frank, the Versaillists are shelling the Arch and all the country round about. They see the Communist artillery coming up. There 'll be fun here in five minutes. And if

you don't wish to get trampled down in the stampede that's coming, you follow me, jest as you followed when we got lost in the country back of St. Jo. You hear me, boy?"

"Yes, Grandpa Drubal," said Frank. But he was annoyed that he should be taken away at the moment when the struggle was beginning. Frank was brave, and, like most boys, was rash.

Nothing could have pleased him better than to saunter down the wide avenue which led out beyond the Arch to the Porte Maillot, and so on to Courbevoie.

From some mysterious point on the Courbevoie range of hills came those strange white messengers of death, which looked first like little puff balls, then like huge eagles floating on wings, then suddenly, as they passed overhead high up in air, like iron cauldrons.

He felt that he would give anything he possessed if he could see the gunners loading and firing. Why could he not go along with the Communist batteries and see the fight from this side?

He was about to ask his grandfather this

mad question when the shouting was renewed. He felt himself violently pushed forward; the little pony reared and snorted, and, looking up, Frank saw a dozen Communist cavalrymen, their faces dark with passion, urging their horses upon him and Grandpa Drubal and the others near them.

The throng was parting to right and left, ladies were fainting in the carriages; frightened coachmen were lashing their horses and struggling to get away from the shells and the menacing Communists.

The insurrectionists were in a dangerous mood. They insisted that the shelling of the Arch was due to signals made from the crowd of "aristos," although this was impossible.

They attacked the flying throng with savage force, and sent it away from the Champs Elysees into the side streets. When the coachmen did not move quickly enough, they beat them over their shoulders with musket barrels and with sabres. They threatened the screaming women with arrest. And while the enormous assemblage dispersed in the utmost disorder, the rumbling and creaking artillery

train went on without interruption, turning around the corner of the massive Arch, and then getting into a sharp trot as it went down the avenue, with the white smoke puffs, which meant the enemy's defiance, hovering above it.

"Come, Frank," said Grandpa Drubal. "Enough for to-day. Remember that we are non-combatants. We are bound to hear some news from Citizen Durand, I reckon, unless he gets killed."

As they made their way as best they could through the panic-stricken company, they heard a new chorus of shrieks behind them, and then a roar of execration. A minute later, something still palpitating was borne away on a cab door which two frantic-looking men had wrenched from its hinges. The mass was covered with a dust robe from the cab.

"Somebody killed by a shell, grandpa?" queried Frank, with a little tremor in his voice.

"Most likely. Come on, boy, come on!"

And presently they came to a street where there were few people, and they galloped at ease until they reached the Place Vendôme

and saw the balcony of their hotel just beyond.

. . . . .

In the Place everything was in commotion. New battalions were marching in, drums were beating, scared and white-faced orderlies were cantering hither and yon. A soldier, visibly under the influence of wine, swore feebly at Grandpa Drubal and Frank as they entered the Rue de Castiglione, and told them that they ought to be at the front. It was fortunate for their peace of mind that they did not understand him.

Grandpa Drubal found little Will listening with his usual birdlike and airy pertness to a conversation between Citizeness Marcelle and another curious-looking woman. Of course he did not understand a word. "But Marcelle will tell me about it afterward, won't you, Marcelle?" he cried. "She's told me more'n forty stories while you've been gone."

The stern citizeness turned her rather gloomy features toward the child, and as she answered him a heart-warm smile swept over

her features and seemed to illuminate and transform them.

Grandpa Drubal noticed this smile, and it gave him, for the first time, confidence in her.

The woman with whom Citizeness Marcelle was talking was a buxom, brown-haired, and rather pleasing person of twenty-five, with a broad brow, handsome and frank violet eyes, and red, full lips which disclosed two faultless rows of dazzling white teeth.

She was neatly, but plainly, dressed in a gown of the coarse stuff worn by the street vendors of vegetables and flowers, and a glance at her light wooden shoes, in which she moved about with as little noise as a lady in slippers, at the knit shawl knotted across her broad shoulders, and at the expansive blue apron with its many pockets, was enough to show that she belonged to the corporation of those who cry carrots and turnips for a living.

She was conversing with great animation, and something in one of her gestures was so suggestive of shouldering a musket that Grandpa Drubal said, pleasantly:

"She acts as if she thought of joining the army?"

"Why, so she does, citizen," responded Citizeness Marcelle. "She is going to join the 101st Battalion of the Commune as *vivandière*—and she will march to-morrow."

"Vivandeer, hey?" queried Grandpa Drubal. "Oh, yes: woman in a cocked hat and military petticoat, with a little keg of rum and water for the poor soldier, hey? Ruther dangerous, isn't it?"

"The 101st!" said Frank. "Why, that's Jules Raisin's battalion."

"It is," said the citizeness. "Laurette, here, is Jules Raisin's cousin, and she wishes to serve the good cause in the same battalion with him. Now, General—citizen, I mean——"

"Oh, Marcelle, I caught you that time," cried Will, gayly.

Marcelle turned like a tigress upon little Will, but she caught him up in her arms with tenderness and hugged him tightly to her lean breast. Then, as her thin hands caressed the child's hair, she continued, in French:

"The citizen knows thy cousin, Laurette. They were together in the same city, out there in America."

Laurette, the vegetable seller, now took a good look at Grandpa Drubal. Then she suddenly laughed merrily in clear, silvery tones, and extended a plump hand to the old man.

"But I have seen the citizen before," she said. "He was riding in the Rue de Rivoli beside my cousin Jules, and, *ma foi!* he is much the better horseman of the two."

When this had been translated to Grandpa Drubal, he remembered the woman whom they had seen wearing the red liberty cap, and asked Laurette if she were the person. Meantime, he shook hands gravely, and requested Marcelle to offer the handsome volunteer a glass of wine.

But Laurette would not taste wine. She confessed to the wearing of the red cap, however, and, drawing it from her pocket, she flourished it three times around her pretty head, over which a bit of black lace was tastefully draped, and cried, rather shrilly: "*Vive la Commune!*"

As she uttered the cry, the smile faded out of her face, and was replaced by a fierce expression like that of one seeking vengeance.

Little Will shrank back from her as she gave the war cry of the insurrection, and Frank's brave heart gave an extra throb or two.

Grandpa Drubal looked at her like one in a dream. He was thinking of what he had been told, that there were a hundred and fifty thousand women like her in Paris.

"I believe they'd fight better than the men, if they were given muskets and cannon," thought Grandpa Drubal.

Laurette lingered to talk with Marcelle long after the old man and his two boys had finished their simple luncheon. He noticed that the women were very earnest, and that from time to time they wept silently.

By and by Laurette arose and, politely saluting Grandpa Drubal and the children, said:

"Now I must go and leave my vegetables and my cart at the Halles and get into my uniform. You will see me to-morrow when the 101st marches. To the pleasure of reseeing you! *Vive la Commune!*"

She gave the military salute, kissed Marcelle on both cheeks, turned lightly in her wooden shoes, and was gone.

"A heart of gold," said Citizeness Marcelle. "During the siege, citizen, she literally starved that her poor old bed-ridden and imbecile aunt might have a double portion of food. And now she gives away the few vegetables that she carts about in her little wagon whenever she meets any hungry people. She might sell them to rich folk in the hotels for their weight in gold, for the vegetables that we have seen since the Prussian siege was ended have all come hundreds of miles, from the south of France. But she is too generous! Ah, heart of gold, shall I never see thee more?"

Citizeness Marcelle ended her sentence in French and began to cry at the same time, so Grandpa Drubal and the boys went into their private room, and there the old man fell into deep thought, while Frank and Will, who heard the bugles and drums in the street, were wild to go out, but dared not do so without his permission.

Grandpa Drubal was reflecting on his position. Evidently the vast city of Paris, with its monuments, museums, palaces, and thousands upon thousands of costly residences was soon to be the scene of a horrible struggle.

What was his duty to these boys, whom he had brought with him to Paris?

Ought he not to remove them at once to a place of safety?

He would go forthwith to the consul, tell him the real object of his visit to Paris, enlist that official's services in the search for his erring son, then take the boys out of Paris through the lines of the Prussian army, and place them in a comfortable house in some provincial town till the Commune were vanquished or triumphant. Yes, yes; to the consul that very afternoon.

He looked at his watch. It was already a quarter of four, and the vice-consul had told him that the consul left his office at three, so he must put off his visit till morning. But he would not lose a minute then. No, no.

"Grandpa's asleep," said Frank, "and

I feel as if my eyes had sticks in 'em. Let's lie down, Will, and take a good snooze."

"Oh, Frankie, what was that?" cried Will, clutching his brother's hand and sidling up to him as if demanding protection.

It was a terrible scream, like that of a woman in mortal agony. It turned Frank's young blood cold, and it brought Grandpa Drubal to his feet and made him rub his eyes and say, in a bewildered way :

"Injins, Frank. Where are they? Nothing but Injins can yell like that!"

He opened the door and found himself face to face with Citizeness Marcelle, whose cheeks were white and whose whole frame trembled violently.

"Ah, citizen!" she cried, raising her clenched hand and shaking it at the skies, "we are betrayed! The Communist army is all cut to pieces!"

"What did I tell you, Frank?" said Grandpa Drubal.

"To pieces!" shrieked Marcelle, growing livid. "It was on the plateau of Chatillon that they met the regulars, and there they let

themselves be beaten! Oh, the dogs! the monsters! To lower our beautiful banner and to run! The survivors ran all the way into Paris, the *canaille!* Oh, they shall go to the guillotine! I will look to it myself! And Bergeret, the general, fled in a carriage! Oh, the shame of it! But the cowards shall go to the guillotine! *La Belle Louison** shall drink their blood, citizen, and you shall come and see them executed. The cowards, the dogs, the *canaille!*"

Grandpa Drubal listened to this harangue without moving a muscle.

"If you get so stirred up by your first battle," said he, "what will it be when you get to your sixth, your tenth, and your twentieth."

"Oh, my husband! He will be killed! Perhaps he is already dead!" cried Marcelle. "I must run into the Place Vendôme and inquire if anything has been heard about the wounded."

And turning from the old man she ran swiftly to the stairway and vanished down it like a ghost.

* The guillotine.

Grandpa Drubal rubbed his eyes, as if he feared that he were dreaming. But there was no doubt of the reality. Frank, who had stolen to a window commanding a view of the Rue de Castiglione, cried out that the street was filled with men and women who acted as if they had gone distracted.

They rushed to and fro, wringing their hands, shouting, snarling at each other, and crying: "*Trahis! Trahis!* We are betrayed!"

Then came a column of Communist troops and drove them away. But the screaming and shouting was renewed in the side streets, and was kept up until long after the April sun had cast its pale glories over the ancient roofs of the picturesque houses in the Place Vendôme, and had given to the carven face on the wall, which had so fascinated little Will, an expression of sinister rejoicing.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ADVENT OF SNY.

THE pleasantest hour of the day to Frank, during this exciting period, was the still time just after the early dawn, when the sleepy twittering of the birds was faintly heard on the house-tops, and the mellow sunshine of April came glinting in through the long windows, making a little aureole around the innocent head of little Will, lighting up the grave face of Grandpa Drubal as he lay asleep, and inspiring Frank with sudden energy.

It was all so delightful and romantic, so like and yet so unlike the things of which he had dreamed when he was a smaller boy; so strange to think of being in the midst of this great fight—that it set his young heart to throbbing with a host of vaguely defined emotions.

Once he thought he would run away and enlist in the columns of one or the other of the

contending armies, becoming a boy-soldier and slaughtering innumerable enemies, and perhaps outdoing Bonaparte by being a general at sixteen. Then his sober common sense told him that this was but an idle fancy. Yet no sooner had he dismissed one idea than another came, and so he passed many delicious morning hours before Marcelle knocked at the folding doors of the bed-chamber, and brought in the silver platter with the great bowls of chocolate and the savory rolls of bread lying beside them.

One morning Grandpa Drubal slept longer and heavier than usual, and Frank, unable to restrain his impatience, jumped up and huddled on his clothes, drank the chocolate which was waiting for him, popped the roll into his pocket, and knowing full well that he was doing something for which Grandpa Drubal would reproach him, ran down the long flights of stairs to the street.

Paris could not have been more quiet at that particular hour had there been no insurrection. The Place Vendôme was almost deserted. The only sign of war was the

slouching sentinel who stood just inside the *porte-cochère* of one of the great mansions, leaning dejectedly on his gun and smoking his pipe. The sunshine flooded the wide streets. A little flower girl in a clean blue apron and a white cap trundled her small barrow past Frank, singing gayly as she went. The odor of violets stole upon the air; a company of white-frocked cooks and their assistants went by, hastening to their work in some hotel or mansion; here and there a cab crawled slowly along the smooth pavement; and in the distance Frank could hear the melodious cries of the street merchants plying their trade in contemptuous forgetfulness of the revolution and its dangers.

"Well," said Frank, taking his bread out of his pocket and beginning to munch it, "I must say this does not look much like war."

At this moment a shadow fell across the sunshine in front of him, and he looked up. A tall, gaunt, and somewhat ragged youth of fteen or sixteen stood near him, gazing ather hungrily at the bread which Frank was devouring with gusto. The face of this youth

was like many that Frank was familiar with elsewhere, and he felt, the moment he set eyes upon him, a singular friendliness toward its owner. Yet he could not have told how or why. The youth had a bold, but not impertinent, gaze; it came from a pair of keen gray eyes, which looked Frank steadily in the face, and seemed to derive amusement from the study of the boy at his improvised meal.

Yet there was in the youth's look, despite his whimsical expression, a certain nameless feeling of want and privation which touched Frank's sympathetic nature. "If I try my French on him," thought Frank, "he will probably run away, scared half to death. Here goes in English."

And all at once he broke the remainder of the bread in halves and held one of them to the new-comer, saying pleasantly:

"Have some?"

To his surprise the youth moved toward him with remarkable spryness, saying, as he came along, in a tone and with an accent which marked him as from some Western State:

"Seeing as it's you, don't care if I do. Aint seen such a piece of bread as that in about six thousand years, now, as nigh as I can recollect."

And extending a long, lean hand he took Frank's offering, and began to gnaw upon it with a vigor and an appetite which showed Frank that his new acquaintance was suffering from hunger.

"Goodness!" said the charitable Frank, "why didn't you tell a fellow that you were an American? I might have stood staring at you for a week before I should have dared to say anything in French. Here, you take the rest of this, and I will get two more in about half a minute. Don't you stir until I come back."

The youth looked steadily at him, and his lips smiled. But the gray eyes did not smile. They kept their watchful look, as if they could not believe in any good fortune, and were bound to be ready to escape from evil luck, if it came that way.

Frank dashed back up the stairs, through the passageways, and cautiously peeped into

the bedroom. The two sleepers were still oblivious to all around them. Frank quietly took their two little loaves of bread from the breakfast tray, poured the chocolate from their bowls into a decanter standing on the toilet table, at imminent risk of cracking the thin glass with the hot liquid ; then, with his booty, he slipped down the stairs as hastily as he had ascended them.

The gray-eyed youth was standing just where Frank had left him. The bread had disappeared. When Frank rushed up to him, holding out the hot chocolate and another little loaf, the gaunt youth's gray eyes brightened a little. "Hold on!" he said. "Let's move up into this next doorway. Now, if this is all right, I'm ready to take breakfast with you. But I don't want any misunderstandings."

He said this in such a formal, restrained way that Frank could not help smiling, at which the gray eyes grew more severe.

"Why, this is all right," said Frank. "My folks are staying in the hotel, and I thought you looked as if you needed some breakfast. Am I right?"

"You can bet you're right!" said the youth. "Breakfast! Why, I haint seen such a thing for a month. No, nor lunch neither. No, nor many dinners to speak of. Well, maybe three times a week I get something like a square meal. That isn't bad for these times."

Frank gazed at his new acquaintance open-mouthed, wondering what he would say next. At last he ventured to inquire, in a softened voice: "How did you get into such a scrape? Did you lose your folks, or what?"

"Well, now," said the youth, with the same deliberate manner which had so amused Frank, "you must not ask too many personal questions at once. The question before the House now is, Do you and me breakfast together, or do we not?"

Frank smiled again. "Well, let's say we do," he said. "Nobody seems to think it strange that we are eating on the street. Here, take a pull at this hot chocolate; get outside that loaf. Then we can talk."

The gray eyes flashed keenly upon Frank.

"You'll jine in good earnest, will you?"

"Of course. You take what you want, and I will take the rest. Then, if you would like to come with me to see Grandpa Drubal, I reckon maybe we can help you out of your trouble."

"Say, now," said the youth, "don't go off at half-cock that way. I haven't said I was in any trouble."

The thin lips shut tightly together. For a moment it looked as if the youth was about to throw down the decanter and the bread and run away. But he took another look at the provisions, then raised the decanter to his mouth and took a long drink. He handed it back to Frank, and extended his lean hand.

"Shake!" he said. "You're a white man. That's the best thing I've tasted since the beginning of the siege—the old siege, I mean."

"What, when the Prussians were besieging Paris?" said Frank. "Were you here then?"

"I should say I was. I started my lessons in light meals then. About the time they commenced to eat elephants, and pet dogs, and cab horses, and old cats, and other things, I beginned to find out that the human stomach

don't require more than one meal a day. Yes, and I've practised it ever since."

The thin lips closed tightly again, as if their owner suddenly realized that he had said too much. Frank's friendly heart was deeply touched. Here was a misery which he could realize and sympathize with. Here, too, was a boy (for after all he was but a boy, although taller and older than Frank) with whom he could talk about the grand events going on around him; one who, perhaps, might be made a companion and a helper in the boyish escapades which he could not help planning, although as yet he had attempted none of them. While the youth slowly, yet with a relish almost painful to witness, ate the last crumbs of the bread, Frank said:

"My name is Corners; what's yours?"

"Sny," said the tall youth, without looking up. "What's your first name?"

"Frank."

"Well, that's all right; your name's Frank and mine's Sny. That's enough to work on, aint it?"

Frank laughed heartily. "Do you mean

that Sny is your only name?" he said; "first or last?"

"Fust and last," answered the tall youth, with a gravity which put an end to further enquiry. "Sny; just Sny, and nothing but Sny until further orders."

Saying which, he looked Frank squarely in the face and frowned in a manner which indicated that he was not to be catechised any farther, at least on matters concerning his own personality. Then he began, in a rambling way, to tell Frank of some military manœuvres taking place in the plain which could be overlooked from Montmartre. "I must be going up to the hill pretty soon," he said reflectively. "Maybe you would like to go along. But then, I suppose, you would be afraid to go with a stranger."

"Why, no," said Frank, with a little flush of pride. "I don't think I am much afraid of anything. But I should not like to go without asking Grandpa Drubal's permission. I don't think it would be fair; do you?"

"No, I suppose not," said Sny. "I never asked nobody's permission to do nothin' yet."

Here the gray eyes twinkled. "Least not since I can remember. But there is a mighty good reason for that."

Something very like a sigh of regret came to the gaunt youth's lips.

"And what was the reason?" said Frank.

"Haint had nobody to ask."

"My goodness, poor fellow! Haven't you had your father"—a little sob came into Frank's throat as he thought of his own lost father—"nor your mother with you, way out here, so far from home?"

"Well, now," said Sny, "we're gittin' personal again. I reckon we'd better postpone these confidences, as they say at the theatre, until we get a little more used to each other; at least," he added timidly, "if you care about any further acquaintance. I can do lots of things, you know. I aint no sponge. Maybe you wouldn't like to have me show you that fight we was talking about a few minutes ago."

Frank hastened to declare he should like nothing better on earth. "Why, it would be glorious fun," he said. "Having a person to

talk to would be half the good of it. Grandpa is too solemn, or else he gets too fierce, and I don't enjoy it with him. If he says I can go you can count me in."

At this moment a Communist soldier, hastening to join his battalion, with his gun carried lightly by the loop over his shoulder and his hat set awry on his black, curly head, caught sight of Sny, and saluted him with half a dozen curious phrases which Frank did not understand, but which seemed to be very gracious. Sny replied in what Frank judged must be reasonably good French.

"You know some of these men, then?" he said.

"Lots of them," answered Sny. "I used to live in the St. Antoine quarter. That man there is a bronzeworker, and gets big wages in times of peace. Probably he'll get a hole through him now, and then he won't want any more wages. He's a fool, I tell him, but he says he is a patriot."

Frank was burning with impatience to learn how Sny had found his way to the great capital, and had become so familiar as he seemed

with its people; but he determined to be discreet. Presently Sny entered upon a rambling description of the beauties of Montmartre, and while he was talking Frank observed him closely.

Sny was fully a head and shoulders taller than Frank, and his head seemed older than his body. There was a delicate, almost refined, look about the brow and the eyes, while the nose, the lips, and the chin testified to a practical, ingenious nature. Frank had heard much about vagabonds and adventurers since he had come to Europe, and for a moment he had been suspicious of Sny; but there was something in the youth's manner which savored thoroughly of honesty.

Sny was dressed in a long brown overcoat, which must have seen its better days many years before. The sleeves were too short, and the great hands and wrists, which were exposed, were as brown as any gypsy's. He wore a pair of dark blue trousers, one leg of which looked as though it might have been torn partly off by some angry dog, so frayed and tattered was it. The other was in good

repair, and came down frankly to meet and cover a rather worn and broken slipper. On what Frank learned afterward to call the short pant-leg, Sny wore a coarse shoe, which had several gaping wounds in toe and heel. About his thin neck an old cravat was loosely twisted. A coarse flannel shirt, which had lost its collar, peeped from beneath this bit of neck finery.

The bulging pockets of the overcoat at once enlisted Frank's attention. Sny observed this, and while he was talking he began to fumble first in one pocket and then in another, and finally he laid before Frank half a dozen samples of the museum within. There was a huge jack-knife, with a rusty blade; an old cook-book, on the back of which notes were written in a fine, nervous handwriting; a horse-shoe, a few nails, ten or a dozen cartridges, a small hammer, a tin cup, two or three newspapers, and a piece of common sole-leather.

"I laid out," said Sny, as if communing with himself, "to patch my footgear this afternoon, but now that I have struck up with

you, I guess the shoes 'll have to wait. It will be great fun seeing that fight from the top of the hill."

"Oh, I'm bound to go!" said Frank. "I am going to ask grandpa as soon as he gets up, and you must come and see him. He would not let me go with anybody that he didn't——"

"Oh, well," said Sny, with an air of disappointment, "if you are going to have the old boy size me up, I reckon our excursion's off. He never would let you go with a fellow in my kind of toilet, I don't reckon."

"He wouldn't care anything about that," said Frank, "if he was sure that you knew how to get out of a scrape, if we got into one. I have been in some pretty rough places in Kansas and Missouri."

"That so?" said Sny. "Why, my folks belong to the border!" Then he stopped suddenly, and a faint blush colored his lean cheeks, as if he felt that he had said too much. "Leastwise, my family lived in Ohier at one time," he added. "And when I was a little fellow, I went down to Cincinnati one

day and stayed to the house of a cousin, I think it was," he continued hesitatingly. "Fust evening I was there I went out and sot on the front steps of the house, and there was a city boy came along. I was pretty thin in those days, and when he seed me sitting there he sung out: 'Gaspipe! Come and see the gaspipe!' which was pretty sassy, I call it."

"What did you do?" said Frank.

"Well, I clumb down from the steps, and I took out after this city chap and he run around the corner, and kept singing, 'Gassy, gassy, gas-pipe,' and pretty soon I caught him, and I tied him full of bow-knots. He never said nothin' more to me while I was in Cincinnati, though his paw 'lowed he was going to have a law-suit with my—cousin about it."

Frank laughed heartily at this, but Sny looked straight ahead of him as if lost in remembrance of those early days.

They talked so rapidly and so merrily that they were completely lost to surroundings, and Frank started to his feet and felt very shaky all over when he suddenly saw tower-

ing before him the huge form of Grandpa Drubal.

"Great Scott, Frank! what have you got here?" said the old man, in his most cheerful tones. "Regular picnic, right on the pavement, too. Well, this beats the Dutch! If I aint mistaken, that's my breakfast you have got there, my boy. But it don't matter. Marcelly gave me and Will another just as good—and—where did you find your friend, Frank?"

While Frank was stammering an explanation, which was difficult because of his desire not to wound the pride of his new acquaintance, Sny drew himself up to his full height, and, unconsciously hiding the wounded shoe with the passable slipper, and drawing up his wrists as far as possible into the sleeves of his faded overcoat, he assumed an air of lofty indifference to the conversation.

But Grandpa Drubal's keen eyes could not be deceived. He understood the situation fairly well. "Found him here, Frank, and thought he wanted something a little hot to drink, did you? Well, come right in here.

young fellow, and sample our other breakfast a little later on. You look as if some fodder wouldn't kill you. Been striking it rather rough, lately?"

The hearty good-humor and blunt speech of Grandpa Drubal seemed to touch the right chord in Sny's peculiar nature. He lost a little of his haughtiness and answered pleasantly:

"Well, it aint been quite so fat as I have seen it. Times are a little mixed here, and I get sort of mixed, too, but I guess I shall pull out all right."

"Oh, I am sure you will," said Grandpa Drubal. "Americans always come right side up, if they behave right. You look like the good sort. Come in and tell us about your adventures, and perhaps we can tell you something of ours, and get you something to do if the folks don't get to shooting too fast."

"Nothin' to tell, as I know of," said Sny. "I am here alone, and picked up a good living —odd jobs, you know—until they got to fighting, and then the bottom sort of dropped out

of everything. If I could be of any use to you, I would like it first-class."

Delighted at the turn the conversation was taking, Frank stole into the hotel and laid away the remnants of the breakfast; then returned to find his grandfather already patting Sny on the back, and offering to engage him "for odd jobs, you know; just showing us the way, and so on."

The result was that by noon Sny was somewhat more comfortably dressed. His broken foot-gear had disappeared, and had been replaced by a pair of shoes which Grandpa Drubal produced from his trunk, and which fitted the capacious feet as if they had been made for them. In his new equipment he looked highly presentable, and when he once more mentioned the subject of the fight which he wished to witness, and the excursion to Montmartre, Grandpa Drubal accepted, and even agreed to take Will, as Sny assured him that there was not the smallest danger.

The afternoon was cloudless and glorious, and the long rows of grayish-white buildings were resplendent under the April sun. At

two o'clock the little company climbed the long and now silent Rue Blanche in a rickety cab, drawn by two half-starved horses. Sny and Frank sat on the front seat chattering like magpies with the driver, who seemed to understand what they both said, although Frank's French was but limited. In the carriage Grandpa Drubal reposed majestically on the seat, with Will sitting gravely beside him. Up, and up, and up they went. The air was purer. The houses were less thickly set together. Here and there through the open gates leading into some courtyard they caught glimpses of grass-grown enclosures, where a few scared-looking servants were lolling lazily with their pipes. All the district had a desolate air. Now and then a woman's face peeped out at them from a balcony or around a corner, then was withdrawn hastily. They crossed the great "exterior boulevards" and climbed along the crooked Rue Lepic; then, turning abruptly to the right, they found themselves directly at the base of a frowning hill, crowned with a vast windmill.

"Not far from my house now," said Sny cheerily. "We'd better leave the carriage here and walk the rest of the way."

Little Will was in ecstacies at the spectacle of the windmill. He asked no less than thirty questions concerning it as they climbed the steep roadway, turned back to the right again and, passing through a rustic gateway, came out upon the great grassy plateau which overlooked the plains to the northeast of the city. As they passed beneath the long arms of the windmill there was a dull boom heard in the direction of Fort Issy.

"They're at it! They're at it!" cried Sny excitedly. "Now, we'll take a look right from this point; then we'll go down and see my house."

Searching in one of his pockets he brought forth a battered field-glass, and offered it with much dignity to Grandpa Drubal. "Try this, sir," he said.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON MONTMARTRE.

WHILE the old gentleman was availing himself of Sny's glass to get some idea of the military movements which, with the naked eye, he could but dimly discern afar off, the boys dropped down upon the grass and fell into a whispered conversation. Little Will took the lead with questions which fell upon Sny as fast as the bombs were falling on the Communists from the batteries of the government troops.

Sny stood the bombardment well, and gave such lucid and interesting answers, couched in the right kind of boy-talk, that Will's heart warmed to him, and he at once began to call him "Sny." A faint flush came into the lean youth's cheek as he heard his name called by the sweet-voiced child. The gray eyes opened wider and wider, and something like the real look of boyhood stole into the

face which a few hours before had been stern and almost forbidding in its expression.

"Grandpa is great on military movements," said Frank, with an air of importance. "Out in St. Louis everybody calls him general."

"No, they don't, Frank," said Will. "Sometimes they call him colonel."

"Oh, pshaw! only those that don't know him," said Frank, with a deep accent of scorn. "You are old enough to know, Will, that no man as big and tall as grandpa, after going through as many things as he has, is ever called anything less 'n general. I reckon not!"

"Everybody's colonel or major out where I——"

Sny stopped short, and turned his face away. Little Will pressed him with questions, but Frank was too discreet. He saw that the tall youth had a secret, and he resolved that it should not be wrenched from him by artifice.

"Now, Will," he said, "let Sny alone. He's awful good to let us come up here and see this splendid hill, and all the men fighting

over there, and you don't want to bother him."

"Oh, he don't bother me," said Sny. "I would like to sit and do nothing but answer his questions all day long."

Little Will turned his wondering gaze upon him, as if unwilling to believe that such sacrifice was possible in this selfish world.

"Ho, ho!" laughed Frank. "You would have to have an eight-hour law passed, I reckon, or Will would work you to death. He's terrible on questions. But there is always one way to stop him. Don't answer him until he has asked the seventh time. Then he will get mad and scream his question at you, and then he will subside. Aint that so, Will?"

"Say, Frankie," said Will, "why don't the old windmill move its arms? I would like to move around on them."

"Oh, grief! he's beginning again," said Frank. "Let's run away, or he'll pester us to death."

"No, no," said Sny, falling back upon his elbow in the grass and sniffing the perfume of

a wild rose blooming close beside his thin face. "Let the little fellow alone; I like to hear him. It reminds me—— Glory, that was a big puff of smoke!" he continued. "Now, there will be some fun. We'd better watch out."

Grandpa Drubal was deeply interested, and it was not until some minutes later that he turned around, apologetically, saying: "My boy, I quite forgot that you wanted to see something of this thing yourself," and he handed Sny the glass, saying: "This is very fine. Where did you pick it up?"

"I got it out on the line of the retreat from Clamart, in the Prussian siege," answered the boy. "When the first fighting started there was truck enough thrown away to fit out a curiosity shop. I've got some of it up in my house, if you would like to see it by and by," he added timidly.

"Well, I should like nothing better," exclaimed Grandpa Drubal. "This is great fun up here; I haven't enjoyed anything more since our arrival. Now I am going to sit down on this bank here and smoke a cigar,

and you young folks can gambol about to suit yourselves, but you must agree not to go off anywhere without giving me notice. I suppose we are not trespassing here," he added, glancing up at a tall, sallow woman who was hovering in the neighborhood of the windmill, as if spying out their movements.

"Not a bit," said Sny. "You'll be less disturbed here than anywhere else in Paris in these times, I think. The old woman there runs a little wine shop, just back of the windmill, and sometimes she does odd jobs for me, when I'm able to pay for them. She brought me bread and milk every morning when I was sick during the siege. If it hadn't been for her I reckon I shouldn't have wanted any more bread and milk for the next two or three thousand years."

Grandpa Drubal looked down at the youth through a mist which had quickly gathered in his eyes. The thought of his own lost son came with new force into his mind as he reflected on the misfortunes and misadventures which this poor boy had probably encountered alone in the vast capital, almost, if not

quite, penniless. Yet he had found friends, and so might the poor wandering Almon. He would wait and hope; but the waiting and hoping seemed, somehow, in this brilliant April sunshine, more mocking, more bitter, than ever before.

He lighted his cigar, stole to the bank and sat down, looking out over the long lines of mottled gray stone houses which extended down the steep slope of the hill and fled away across the dusty plain until they seemed to sink into its sandy expanse. He had been reading that morning of this very hill—of the legend which tells how St. Denis met his martyrdom there, and after having lost his head took it under his arm and marched merrily off to the spot where now stands the mighty cathedral consecrated to his memory, in which once reposed through long centuries the unbroken line of French sovereigns.

He reflected how, when the great Revolution came, this church was rudely invaded by the hungry and vindictive mob, which tore from their sacred coffins the once revered forms of their monarchs and cast them forth into the

streets. A shadow seemed to fall upon him from this romantic, yet cruel, past, so full of strange legends, and startling tragedies, and horrible cruelties, perpetrated by the strong upon the weak and defenceless. But meditate as he might upon the past, rove as his gaze might over the hills, up to the great Fort Valerien, with its symmetrical masses of wall, crowning the slopes on which spring-time was painting delicatest green, he could not banish from his mind the image of his son, alone in this great whirlpool of humanity, perhaps driven into temptation which he could not resist, possibly starving; yes, even dead! No, no; he would not think that.

His cigar had gone out, but he resolutely lighted it afresh and puffed away, and, looking around to see that he was not observed by the boys, he dried the eyes which were filled with tears.

Meantime the boys roved delightfully from one place to the other on the great plateau. While Sny showed them the spot where several hundred cannon had been placed for safe keeping, he told them the cruel story of the

murder of two generals by the excited Communists at the beginning of the insurrection, and then pointed out to them the different forts which could be distinguished from their standpoint. Then they went through a little gate, which, when it was opened, set a melodious bell to tinkling, and soon brought to them the tall, sallow woman, who was very good-natured. Taking a rusty key from her girdle, she led them up a long flight of steps, through the interior of the old windmill, and finally to its top, where, from a platform with rickety railings around it, and sheltered from the sun by a huge red umbrella, which might reasonably enough have been taken for the symbol of the Commune, they gazed out over the fair domain of Queen Paris, and saw the miles on miles of vast mansions, with the churches rising majestically like mountains in the architectural plain here and there. They noted the domes, the spires, the walls, the tremendous lines of broad streets, with the green trees everywhere shading the sidewalks, and the marching battalions, the sound of whose bugles, when the wind was in the right

direction, drifted up to their ears. With the aid of Sny's glass Frank could see the fountains playing in the squares, and watch the glitter of the sunshine on the great jets of spray, which sprung up to a lofty height and fell back in a shower of diamonds and pearls into the bronze and marble basins.

"Say, Frankie," said little Will, "this is a bigger place than St. Louis, isn't it? And this is just like being on the top of the Four Courts, isn't it, Frankie?"

"Now, Will," said the elder brother condescendingly, "don't be foolish. If you are tired, you can sit down under this umbrella here."

"Oh, I see grandpa; and the woman has gone to bring him up here, too!" cried Will, And, lifting up his young voice, he shouted to the old gentleman, who was majestically endeavoring to explain to the woman that he spoke no French. But finally, when she pointed frantically to the top of the windmill, he concluded there had been some accident, and hastened after her.

By the time he had reached the top of the

long and somewhat rickety staircase Grandpa Drubal was a "little blown," and he was glad to sink down on a rustic seat when he found the boys all safe and sound, and to rest for some minutes before he could recover his breath to give them the scolding which they merited for stealing away without permission.

"If you look in this direction," said Sny, with the dignified air of a millionnaire showing his country seat to a visitor, "you can get a good view of my house."

"Your house!" said the old man, with a twinkle in his eyes. "You didn't tell me, Sny, that you owned any property up here."

"Well, not exactly that," said Sny, a faint flush coming into his thin cheek. "If steamboats was for sale for a dollar a cord, I don't suppose I could buy a gangplank now. But what I mean is, the house I live in, to be more exact. It seems quite like home now," he added, with a touch of sentiment in his voice, "I have got so used to it. Yonder it is, just where you see that angle and those stairs climbing down the hill."

They all looked eagerly in the direction toward which Sny pointed.

Two or three hundred feet down the steep hill, and below the winding course of the Rue Lepic, there was a little plateau, in and around which grew a few scraggy trees, twisted and turned by the winds which, in the winter, howl and shriek over the lofty height. To this plateau, from the steeps above, led down the flight of stairs which Sny had indicated, an old twisting and turning flight which must have been there for centuries, with a broad stone balustrade, and with easy steps wide enough for a giant's feet.

The old house to which Sny alluded stood on the very edge of this tableland, so that its grayish-white wall was built upon the summit and side of a precipice.

No more picturesque outlook over Paris could be imagined. As Grandpa Drubal expressed it, it was the very place for an artist to cage himself.

"Oh, there *was* artists there before the siege," said Sny. Looking up roguishly, he said: "If it hadn't been for an artist, I

reckon I never should have had my domicile there."

"How is that?" said Grandpa Drubal.

"Well," said Sny, "I used to do odd jobs for a Belgian painter that had this place where I live, looking right out over the space there, taking in all Paris in a kind of panorama. When the siege came along, he wanted somebody to look after the place while he was gone, so he invited me to come and stay there, and he paid the rent for six months in advance, so as to keep the place, and he promised to send a little money every few weeks to keep the mill going. He did send, and I was all right until by and by his letters stopped. I can't understand why. And I would have stopped, too, I reckon, if neighbors hadn't been sort of obliging."

A lump seemed to come into Sny's throat. Evidently he was recalling a painful period. Grandpa Drubal's kind heart was touched.

"What! Just left you there to shift for yourself, hey? Well, that was powerful wrong."

"Well, we can't blame him, I suppose,"

said Sny slowly. "He had done a great deal for me, as it was, you see, letting me have the place to stay in.

"I was thinking," he added slowly, "that if you and the boys would like to stay and take dinner with me in my house, since I took breakfast with you this morning, I should kind of like it."

Grandpa Drubal, as he himself expressed it later, was "immensely tickled" at this invitation. The breadth and scope of this boldness fairly took his breath away. This poor waif, afloat without oar or rudder upon the wide sea of misery; this tramper in the street, who had been almost faint with hunger a few hours before, had now so rallied under the genial influence of a little kindness, that his self-respect had fully re-blossomed, and he was anxious to repay all his obligations, even if he could do so only in the crudest manner.

"Well," answered the old gentleman. "We 'lowed to dine at the hotel, and reckoned on taking you down there with us. But it is so nice up here that I for one would like

to go down and see your place, and maybe take a cup of tea with you."

Sny straightened up at this acceptance of his invitation, and seemed momentarily to grow taller. He jingled in his pocket the few coins which Grandpa Drubal had paid him "in advance," as he said, "for the little services which you may render us." He was inwardly calculating, as the old man finished his remarks, what he should get for the repast to which he had invited his new friends.

"Oh, yes!" said little Will. "Let's go down to Sny's house. I want to see him cook on one of those little charcoal things, like Marcelle does. He says he has one up in his house, didn't you, Sny?"

"Well, that's first-rate," said Sny. "Now, boys, come on. The driver can whisk your grandpa around to my house in no time and we can go by the stone stairs. Then we can sit and look at the scenery and some of my curiosities"—here again he seemed to grow taller—"until it is time to have some dinner; then I will just whirl in and cook it."

Grandpa Drubal's eyes twinkled again. "I used to be a right smart hand at cooking myself," he said. "I reckon I can throw up a beefsteak or turn over an omelet with the best of them, and as for coffee—why, I used to be great on that. When we were out after the bushwhackers in Missouri, in '62, the men with me said that the coffee I made was the only thing that kept them alive."

Sny listened respectfully. "Well," he said, "I wasn't much of a cook when I landed in these parts, but I have learned a good many things since then. If you will excuse me a minute I will just do an errand or two, and then we'll slip around to the house."

The carriage went ahead with Grandpa Drubal, down the long stairs the boys raced delightedly, and Sny, placing a couple of silver pieces in the hand of the lean, sallow woman, spoke to her for a few moments in French. She replied with several of those gestures of the head which all French women of the people know how to make, smiled pleasantly at him, and when Sny finally

handed her a five-franc piece left by Grandpa Drubal as the reward for her attention she dropped a courtesy which would have done credit to a lady of Versailles in the days of the Great Monarch.

When they reached the gray old pile of stone which Sny so proudly called his house, and the coachman had been paid and dismissed, Grandpa Drubal was surprised to see that it had apparently no occupants. "What, nobody here?" he said, with just a little flash of suspicion in his mind. The square seemed deserted. There was no one on the benches under the melancholy trees, although the whole place was flooded with sunshine. "Surely you don't live all alone in this place?" he said.

"No," answered Sny; "there is one old woman on the floor above me, but she must be nigh eighty years old. She can't hear a word, nor see very well. She has her food brought up by a little girl once a day. Besides her, and the people that come to see me now and then, I have been the only soul in the house for months."

"And where are the others?" said Frank, opening his eyes wide in astonishment.

"Well, some of them are in the Army of the Commune; some ran away when the Communists took charge. As for the landlord, I think he must be a good many miles from Paris. It is not a very good time for landlords to collect rents just now. It makes it sort of convenient for me, you see."

Grandpa Drubal was just a bit ashamed of his momentary suspicion. He tramped cheerfully up the long flight of old stairs in the wake of the boys, and soon they stood together in the centre of a huge room which was admirably suited for an artist's studio, but must have made a sorry residence for the youth during the sharp weather of the preceding winter, when Paris lay wrapped in the misery of the great Prussian siege.

"Now, just make yourselves to home," said Sny, bustling around. "You will find some benches and old chairs there by the small door. It opens right out into the air. You must not let the little fellow get too near; he might fall out. Just let me put this plank

in front of it and then there won't be any danger."

Grandpa Drubal seated himself in what had once been a rather imposing arm-chair, but was now soiled and rickety; lighted a fresh cigar, and divided his attention between the vast panorama of the city below and the operations of Sny.

CHAPTER IX.

A BREAKFAST WITH SNY.

"NOW, I'm a little rusty in all these things," said Sny, "because, having nothing to cook, you can't practice cooking, don't you see? But if you boys will help, I reckon we can shake the thing together." And he turned to Frank with an encouraging smile which seemed to say, "You are indispensable." Frank was not proof against this delicate flattery, and he enthusiastically accepted Sny's invitation."

"What shall I do first?" he said gravely.

Before answering, Sny divested himself of the long dingy overcoat, and stood before the boys in his shirt sleeves. Frank observed with a pained surprise that Sny had no undercoat, and that the vest which he wore was very thin-looking, as if it had been made for the hottest summer weather. But the frayed and well-worn shirt was clean, and as

Sny rolled up his sleeves, displaying his immense length of wrists and his lean but muscular arms, Frank felt a certain admiration for the independence of character which could lead Sny to forget his temporary poverty.

"The first thing," remarked Sny, with an air of command, "is to wash up. I don't say that all cooks do it. In fact, I have known a good many who did not. But perhaps if they had done their cooking in the presence of an audience, as I am about to do, they would have been more particular."

Grandpa Drubal chuckled at this remark, and said to himself under his breath: "There is a heap of good stuff in that boy. Even his impudence has a kind of wholesome ring to it."

Frank understood, and was already bringing from its corner the tall zinc pitcher, which in Parisian lodgings replaces the sink with its faucets of hot and cold water so general in America. Approaching a metal bowl supported on a tripod of thin iron rods, Sny extended his hands and said: "Now pour,

please." Frank struggled with the big pitcher, and poured the water in true Oriental style. Sny came out fresh and dripping, after deluging his hands and face, and while he was scrubbing himself with the towel, he remarked reflectively:

"I'm thinkin' how we can employ this young gentleman here. I reckon I'll have to let him take a turn at the bellows."

"Oh, do!" said little Will delightedly, without the remotest idea what he was to do with the bellows. "And don't let Frankie stop me. He always interferes."

At this moment a light footstep was heard at the door, and the pale, sallow woman came in with her arms filled with bundles. Frank and Will watched her, big-eyed, while she talked volubly to Sny and opened parcel after parcel, laying the contents upon a white wooden table which stood near a small but neat kitchen range in a corner of the studio.

The boys were beginning to feel hungry, and they took a mental inventory of the preparations for dinner with much satisfaction. Out of one deftly constructed package,

the exterior of which was white and clean enough to have contained loaf sugar or wax candles, came a half peck of charcoal which tinkled as it was tossed into a small basket on the range. Next were displayed some tiny circles of wood which had been saturated in mineral oil. These were the kindlings. The woman's deft hands brought out a head of salad from a third paper, a minute pat of butter from a fourth, a savory and creamy cheese from still another, a large bunch of most appetizing radishes, a dozen sizeable potatoes, two small bottles filled with oil and vinegar, half a dozen eggs, and four handsome mutton cutlets, from still other packages. Then, opening a little pail, she poured into a bowl some magnificent strawberries, fresh from the south of France, such as can be found in early February in the great central markets of the French capital. Evidently the Commune had not yet begun to starve.

After all these good things were arrayed on the table, Sny winked knowingly at Frank, and said: "I've known her a good while, and never known her to come without for-

getting something. I'll bet it's the coffee this time."

But no! From the depths of a seemingly elastic pocket the good woman produced a package containing the coffee, yet another filled with symmetrical lumps of pure white sugar, freshly broken from the loaf, and, finally, half a dozen spoons, which looked as if they had done duty for a full generation.

"I know what she has forgotten!" cried Frank. "She has not brought any bread."

"Most likely," said Sny. "Oh, but she has brought it, though! She generally sets it on end out in the passage until she has unloaded all the other things."

And so it was. A moment later the sallow woman went out into the passage, and returned with her apron filled with the long, crisp loaves, brittle as to crust and as white as the driven snow as to interior, and giving forth an odor fit to send a hungry company into raptures.

"Bread by the yard!" said Frank. "Well, I wouldn't have believed it possible if I hadn't seen it so many times."

"Oh, you often see a Frenchman devour a whole yard of bread," said Sny. "Give him that and a little salad, and some wine and water, and he thinks he is better off than with the roast beef of Old England, or New England either, I reckon."

The sallow woman smiled at the boys and took her departure. Sny now opened a creaking drawer and took from it a large napkin, which, with a piece of string, he tied around his waist in guise of an apron.

"Now," he said, with a comical gesture of one of his lean arms, "if any of them old worthies that used to handle the saucepans for the kings that lived at Versailles want to look down and see a first-class job in cookery, they are welcome to do so. But first we must light the fire. Now, Master Will, if you will pick up them little bellows there, and just go right to work with your small paws to agitate them, you will see how the operation is done."

On the range, over which was the wide and draughty mouth of the chimney, black and yawning, with the early spring breeze sighing in and out of it, stood three or four small

grates, four-footed, and each capable of containing quite a quantity of charcoal. Sny took some of the kindlings, and deftly arranged them in the bottom of each grate; then, from the basket, shook down upon them little heaps of charcoal, which, with a bit of wood, he loosened up and arranged so that the least draught would set them to flaming. Next he applied a match and bits of paper, which he thrust into each of the grates among the kindlings.

"Now, Master Will," he said, "just take the bellows and let them breathe gently on these grates, until the charcoal is all flaming up. That will be your part of the work, and a very necessary part it is, too."

"I think it would be better for Frankie to do this," said Will. "He's the greatest blower of the two."

But no one noticed his pun. Sny was very busy putting water into small, long-handled saucepans, was pulling the leaves from the outside of the head of salad, and giving Frank a number of orders. So Will took the bellows and did his best to

start the flame. But, try as he would, he could make no impression, save in the first grate to put out the growing flame, and in the second to create a great volume of smoke, which a contrary gust from the chimney blew into his eyes and made the tears come. Presently Sny looked over toward him.

"Oh, not that way, my boy!" he said. "You blow too hard. Just breathe, as I said."

He stepped over, and, taking the bellows, with half a dozen deft motions of his hands he had the flame springing up in each of the grates. "That will do," he said. "Now for some hot water," and presently a small saucepan, neatly covered and half filled with water, was placed on one of the little fires.

The boys were so interested in watching Sny's operations that they presently forgot to help him. He took no note of their negligence, but, moving swiftly about, had each one of the charcoal fires covered with something in process of cooking. "There you are," he said triumphantly, after he had "grouped the dinner," as he expressed it, by

which he meant bringing all the grates up together with something simmering and sizzling over each of them. "Now," he said, "if I was an American cook I should think I needed two hundred pounds of coal to carry on this dinner operation. I should be shovelling two or three hods full into a big roaring stove or range, and waste about ten times as much as the dinner ought to cost. Here, you see, four cents worth of charcoal does the business."

By this time Grandpa Drubal was watching the culinary operations as intently as either of the boys.

But Sny seemed so preoccupied with his work that he said nothing to the old gentleman. He flew about noiselessly; now washing potatoes, now testing the eggs, now giving a few smart blows with pieces of wood to each cutlet to lay it out flat, now picking the salad over and over, then putting it into a little wire cage, pouring water through it and swinging the cage over his head time after time until not a drop of water flew from it.

"Salad, you see," he said to the boys, "is

no good unless it is clean. Most people don't know how to clean salad. They just make a try at it and that ends it. Plenty of water will bring out the freshness and the flavor."

And so in half an hour a little table, spread with a snowy napkin, and placed in the centre of the room, was loaded with all the essentials of a very respectable meal. It was still early in the afternoon, but the boys, although accustomed to dining at six o'clock, felt ravenously hungry after their outing on the hill, and even Grandpa Drubal could not resist the temptation of the savory omelet, the crisp bread, and the radishes, fresh as if just pulled in the garden. When they were ready to sit down Sny produced from a mysterious cupboard a tall, black bottle of wine. He placed it upon the table, saying: "The gentleman that left this studio in my care had about two hundred bottles of wine in the cellar. He told me to use it to suit myself. It was lucky that he left something, or I should have given up the ghost during the siege. With a little sup of wine and a piece of bread I used to get through the day very nicely."

"Well," said Grandpa Drubal, "as I have not done anything yet to help I reckon I ought to pull the cork." So, producing a cork-screw from his pocket, he extracted the cork from the bottle, and poured a little of the wine in each of the four thin and fantastic-looking glasses on the table. "Here is your good health, Mr. Sny, and may we meet many times around so well furnished a board."

"Those are my sentiments," said Frank, looking over to Grandpa Drubal, who, by a motion of his head, indicated that Frank might drink the contents of his glass. "Wine is not good for boys," he said, "but this is a special occasion and we won't count it."

"Wine and water is best for little boys," said Sny, diluting the wine set before Will with water from a cracked decanter. "That is what they call, in the French schools, '*abondance*.' I guess the best way to translate that is that you can have all you want of it because it don't cost much. In the schools they make it three parts water and one part wine."

That was a merry dinner. Everything was

brought off the fire in apple-pie order by the ingenious Sny, who never was entrapped into letting anything burn, but seemed to have eyes in the back of his head, so that he could watch the dinner and at the same time look at his guests and tell them amusing stories and see that their wants were satisfied. The cutlets, followed by the salad and the cheese, were despatched with gusto, and Grandpa Drubal leaned back in his chair, and, taking a long black cigar from the pocket of his flowered waistcoat, was thinking how pleasant it would be to have a strong cup of coffee, when suddenly the aroma of that delectable fluid smote full upon his senses.

"Ah! the coffee is ready now," cried Sny, jumping up. "The best part of the dinner, I call it." And, going to the range, he took from a dark corner, where it had been hidden, a large metal receptacle crowned with an oval globe of glass, into which the aromatic liquid was just bubbling up from the recesses below. "See," said Sny, pointing to it, "when the coffee touches that little niche in the glass two-thirds of the way up, then I shut off the

spirit lamp. The coffee sinks back and is just ready to pour. At that minute it is fit for gods to drink."

"And I reckon," said Grandpa Drubal, "that anything good enough for them is good enough for us." And he lighted his cigar with an air of supreme satisfaction, as Sny poured from the queer-looking coffee pot a delicious cupful.

"I wonder you didn't make your fortune, Sny," said Grandpa Drubal, "just cooking for these distracted Communists. From what little I have seen of them, they don't seem to have anything very good to eat, or anybody that knows how to cook."

"Oh, there are plenty of cooks in the ranks of the Commune, for that matter," said Sny. "Just now they are too poor to practise their art. They wouldn't trust any stranger, for they think that nobody can cook but themselves."

"Say, Sny," said Will, "how did you keep warm here during the winter? For you said it was terribly cold during the siege, and if you only had these charcoal fires——"

"Why, I didn't keep warm," said Sny. "I just most eternally froze! But when I was all ready to give up and get sent to a hospital or something, then there would come a warm day and cheat me into the belief that I was all right, and so before I could make up my mind to do anything decided about moving, I would get nipped by another cold spell. It was rather Arctic, I can tell you! I used to go to bed early in the afternoon when it was very cold, and, so as to be in harmony with my surroundings, as the man said, I would imagine that I was on a North Pole expedition, and sometimes I spent hours in dreaming out all the details—how we got cast away on icebergs and chased by polar bears. Then I would get hungry and dream that I was on an ice-bound shore with nothing to eat, and waiting to be rescued, and I would drop off to sleep, unless the cannon was too noisy. And so the weeks used to go."

"It was a terrible position for a young fellow," said Grandpa Drubal, with a tremor in his voice. "Couldn't you get any news to your friends? The mails were allowed

to go out, I am told. Even sent them out in balloons, didn't they?"

"Oh, yes," said Sny. "But you see"—and here he fixed his gray eyes upon Grandpa Drubal's face—"I had no friends to send to, don't you see."

Just as Sny finished speaking there was a sound as of whirring wings, so clear and distinct that all looked up, and Grandpa Drubal sprang to his feet and said: "Why, there is a fine-looking pigeon right on the window sill. It belongs on the roof, probably. Noble fellow, he is! Let's see if he will take a bite to eat." And, with some bread crumbs in his hand, Grandpa Drubal was advancing toward the bird, which gazed steadily at him, with some indignation apparent in its look, but without the least sign of fear. "If I can touch him on the back," said the old man, "I will take him in my hands and bring him over to the table."

"No, no; please don't go nearer to him," said Sny's voice, and Grandpa Drubal noticed that it was tremulous, as with strong excitement. "Just let me get there, I'll take him,"

and he fairly brushed the old man aside, and in another instant had the pretty pigeon sheltered in his hands.

"Oh, ho! He knows you, does he?" said Grandpa Drubal.

Sny did not make any answer. He was busily examining the pigeon's wings, lifting them up, and fumbling beneath them as if expecting to find something. At last he uttered a little cry as of triumph, pulled from the right wing of the pigeon a quill, then took the bird to the table and set him down there, and, after a few words in French from Sny, the bird fell to eating ravenously, taking mouthfuls of bread, pecking at the radishes, and, as Frank said, "making himself generally at home."

"A carrier pigeon, by King!" said Grandpa Drubal in a whisper. Then it suddenly occurred to him that Sny might be engaged upon a more important mission than his appearance and his circumstances indicated.

Sny had sunk back into his chair beside the table, and, without any attempt at concealment, was trying to open, with a tiny knife-

SNY'S CARRIER PIGEONS.

blade, the quill which he had just taken from the pigeon's wing. He succeeded after one or two trials, and his search was rewarded by the finding of a tiny manuscript of finest parchment, which he hastily popped into an old-fashioned memorandum-book, and hid in the recesses of his waistcoat's inner pocket.

The keen eyes of the boys lost none of the details of the examination of the message so strangely brought. But they were both too well brought up to ask any questions. Grandpa Drubal, through the smoke of his cigar, noted the look of mingled apprehension and triumph on the boy's face. Evidently he was receiving messages of great importance from some quarter, and possibly this tale of poverty and misfortune, and this posing as a moneyless inhabitant of a deserted studio, were all parts of an ingenious plan to mask some serious purpose.

If Sny felt that he was observed he did not betray it by any look or gesture. Patting the pigeon's glossy plumes, he said pleasantly: "Good old bird! Good speed this time. You shall have plenty of grain. Now come and

take a snooze." Then he looked up, with a smile in his gray eyes, and said very simply: "All these pigeons can be taught to carry messages, I reckon. I am making famous progress with this one."

"Looks like you were, Sny," said Grandpa Drubal quietly. And then the conversation changed to other things.

And by and by, when the shadows of evening were beginning to close over the great hill, Sny escorted the company out on to the dark stairs, and, locking and double-locking his door, he guided them down to the Rue Lepic, and in a quarter of an hour, without any adventures, they found themselves once more in the central part of the city.

"I say, grandpa," said little Will, who had been nestled in his grandfather's arms for the greater part of the walk, "it's lucky we sent that coachman home. He would have been mighty hungry by this time. It must be most eight o'clock."

CHAPTER X.

FRANK AND THE HUNCHBACK.

SNY came and went almost daily, bringing gladness to the hearts of the boys whenever his lean, angular form appeared on the hotel staircase. He was a walking encyclopædia of information about Paris and the great struggle which had now begun. He knew the number of battalions at the disposal of the Commune, how many cannon they had, who were the best artillerymen, who were their generals, what would be their plan of defence, and how long they might expect to hold out.

"Then you do not think, Sny," said Grandpa Drubal one day, "that the Commune will become a permanent institution?"

Sny gave the old man a queer look out of his great gray eyes.

"They quarrel among themselves too much for that, I think," he said slowly.

Everything in his attitude was so frank and loyal, except his unwillingness to allude to his home and his parentage, that Grandpa Drubal dismissed all suspicions of him from his mind. Sny seemed to him an adventurous wight, not yet quite emancipated from boyhood, of a rollicking, philosophical humor, ready for any adventure, and liking to dabble in all sorts of experiments.

"Most likely," thought the old man, "he found the pigeons roosting there on his studio balcony, and was experimenting with them." And yet the circumstance seemed a strange one. Whenever he thought of it it puzzled him more and more.

Days came and went—soft April days, delicious with warmth and perfume of the early spring; with soft rays which brought out the perfume of the violets in the great public gardens, now neglected and almost deserted. In spite of the desolation which one great siege, followed by a second one promising to be more terrible, had wrought, there was still beauty enough in the queen of cities to supply half a dozen ordinary towns. The

military operations for the time seemed suspended. Straggling battalions came and went, but there was little clatter of musketry outside. Sometimes Grandpa Drubal, looking from his window at early morning, would see gay troops of excursionists, mounted in cabs and wagons filled with benches, clattering across the smooth pavement on their way to the outskirts for their annual spring frolic. A feeling of security had come to all who were within the walls of the capital, although they knew well that it was the lull before the storm.

One morning, about a fortnight after they had first made the acquaintance of Sny, Frank, who had risen early, appeared at Grandpa Drubal's bedside, and asked permission to go up to Montmartre to pay a visit to Sny in his house.

"Sho!" said the old man rather sleepily. "It is too far for a boy to go alone. You might get kidnapped, Frank. Who knows?"

"Fiddlestick!" said Frank. "I reckon I am big enough to take care of myself. I can run faster than most kidnappers. Besides, at

this hour in the morning I wouldn't meet fifty people going up there. I haven't seen Sny for two days. I'm afraid he is sick. I will be up there and fetch Sny down here, grandpa, before you are ready to go out this morning."

After a little reflection, Grandpa Drubal decided that the visit had nothing dangerous in it.

"If you're disturbed by anybody, Frank, hail a cab and jump into it," he said, "and come back here. And if you are not back here by ten o'clock, I shall hunt for you."

"All right, grandpa," said Frank joyously, seizing his cap and his cane, and a book or two which he had promised to lend Sny, who was an omnivorous reader.

Away across the grand boulevards and along the Rue de la Trinité Frank sped, soon was climbing the Rue Blanche, and in half an hour he was at the top of the stairs near "Sny's house."

Up to this time he had hardly looked around. But, stopping to breathe on the topmost step of the great stone stairway, he saw

a bent and crooked figure stealing away in a manner which struck him as peculiar. "Why, it looks as if that fellow had been following me," he said to himself. And he gave an extra flourish to his cane, and stepped forward as if to hail the personage. Then he reflected that it would be better to continue his route and see if the man were really dogging his footsteps. So he went smartly forward into the centre of the square, then came back lightly on tiptoe to the top of the stairs.

Surely, there was the same man, bent and crooked, but not old—a youngish man with a bad face—scrambling up the stairs, as if hurrying to see where Frank had gone. At sight of the youth returning, he took to his heels and scurried away, as if afraid of being stopped and questioned. "He was following me," thought Frank, and a little chill shot through him. "I wonder what he wants of me!"

Then it suddenly occurred to him that he had seen the man's face before. He dimly recalled it as one which had passed before him

when he was walking in the Tuileries Garden with Sny. Was it so, or was it the remembrance of a dream?

He pushed this aside as an idle fancy, and hurrying across the square entered the open door of Sny's house, where no *concierge* with sharp voice challenged him as he started up the stairway. His footfalls had a strange sound in this deserted old house, which seemed full of strange memories of the past. He could almost fancy that ghosts brushed by him as he mounted the black stairs with their old-fashioned balustrades of thick timber carved two or three centuries before Columbus had discovered the New World. "Pshaw!" he said, "I wish grandpa would let me alone with his precautions. He's enough to scare a fellow to death, anyway." Yet in spite of his determination to be courageous, when a loose blind flapped at a window which he could not see, awakening echoes which fled through the darkened halls, he jumped back as if a mysterious hand had been laid upon his shoulder. "This is pretty grewsome," he said to himself, as he climbed the last flight

of stairs. "I shall be glad when I get into Sny's den."

Sny's door generally stood ajar when he was at home. As the youth himself expressed it, "There was no use in guarding against robbers when you have nothing to steal." The black, ancient oaken door opened directly into a small ante-chamber, out of which a smaller door in the high wall led into the studio. Frank placed his hand on the outer door, expecting it to swing open, but to his surprise he found it solidly closed. Evidently Sny was not at home. Yet he disliked to return without seeing him. "Maybe he is not up yet," he said.

A fragment of bell-cord still hung outside the door. On tiptoe Frank just managed to reach it, and, grasping it, he rang a peal which he could hear resound through the recesses of the apartment within. There was no answer, and Frank, leaping up to catch the rope, rang again so lustily that if there had been any inhabitants other than Sny upon the floor, they must have come rushing to their doors to know what was the matter.

After a long time, the sound of footsteps was heard in the ante-chamber, and there was a fumbling at the lock of the door. Just as the key grated in the lock, Frank fancied that he heard behind him a shuffling step on the stairway. He looked around quickly, and, to his surprise, and somewhat to his alarm, he saw the top of a head vanishing as its owner descended noiselessly. Evidently the strange figure which he had seen on the stone stairs in the street was following him with dogged perseverance.

But youth takes small account of such things so long as the danger is still at a little distance, and in the joy of greeting Sny, who had now thrown open the door and stood looking, somewhat dazed and just a little pale, at his visitor, Frank forgot his momentary alarm.

"Hallo, Frankie!" said Sny, in a voice which seemed a little hollow and feeble, as if he had been hard at work, or had not had much to eat for a day or two. "What brings you to Elsinore, as Hamlet said to the ghost? Leastways, I have been told that he said so."

"Anxious to see you again, Sny," said Frank. "We were to have taken a walk yesterday, don't you remember? And you didn't appear. I thought perhaps you might be out of sorts."

"Oh, no!" said Sny a little uneasily. "I have been pretty busy on a small piece of work I had to attend to, and I thought I wouldn't bother you." Then he added, with a certain hesitation: "Well, come in, and if you don't mind letting me finish what I am doing, and not ask me what it is, I can be ready for a frolic in about two twinkles of a bed-post." He spoke almost in a whisper, and hurried Frank in and closed and double-locked the door, adding: "You see we have to be sort of prudent in these times. There are so many spies about that any little scientific piece of work, such as I am fixing up here, has to be done where there are no observers."

"Oh!" cried Frank, "I shall not even look at what you are doing. All I want is to get out into the open air with you and have another of those good talks about the big city and its history."

There was no answer, and looking up at Sny he saw that the youth had already left him, and gone to a table in a darkened corner of the room, upon which were placed a number of instruments such as Frank had never seen before. Bending over them, Sny busied himself for a few minutes; then he suddenly pulled a screen around in front of himself and the table, so that Frank could see nothing. At the end of ten or twelve minutes, he came out of his hiding-place bearing in his hands something which looked much like a photograph. He examined it with great care, first through a small glass which he drew from his pocket, then with the naked eye, and at last, nodding his head approvingly he took it back behind the screen, and was gone again for some minutes. When he emerged anew, he pushed the screen away, and Frank saw that all signs of his work had disappeared, and right on the table in the place where the curious instruments had so lately been, now stood two or three soft heliotrope-plumed pigeons with dainty whitish breasts, and with delicately colored bills, murmuring, in

their pigeon talk, what seemed to be cordial admiration of Sny and all his works.

That Frank's features expressed a lively curiosity Sny could not refrain from noticing. Advancing toward the boy, and placing his great hand on Frank's shoulder, he said: "If I could tell you lots of things, I would tell them. But there are some occasions when you can't explain. I reckon you understand that. If you would promise me not to say a word about anything you see when you come here, either to Grandpa Drubal or to anyone else, I should feel a good deal easier in my mind. I suppose you know I would not do anything wrong, and yet I can't tell you what I am doing, and I know you must wonder."

"So long as it is nothing wrong, Sny," said Frank, "I don't want to ask you what it is. I hope it is nothing that will get you into trouble in these troublesome times. And one reason why I came to see you this morning is that I think grandpa is getting ready to go away. We find we cannot do what we came here for, just now, and I

know he wants to be out of the disturbances. And what I wanted to ask you, when I could get you alone, is, Wouldn't you like to join us? I know that grandpa will say 'Come along,' if he thinks I want you. I don't suppose you have anything that makes it necessary for you to remain here?"

"Well, now, we are getting personal again," said Sny, with a flash of his old shyness. "I am not so certain that we could either of us get away if we wanted to. The situation seems to be tightening up a little, as the man said when he was lynched."

"But I thought you believed the thing almost over," said Frank.

"So I did! So I did!" answered Sny. "But since then I have heard some strange news. As for going with you just now, I don't reckon it would be wise. But to be with you as much as I can till you do go is the desire of the undersigned. So come along! But hold on, I believe I haven't eaten my breakfast yet! I got so used to having none a few months ago that I can't always remember to take it."

Frank laughed heartily, and sat down near the range, while Sny made himself a cup of coffee and breakfasted on a penny roll and the two cents' worth of milk which the tall, sallow woman nowadays left every morning at his door. "Now," he said, after the last crumb had disappeared, "I could lead an army or found a colony. Where shall we go to-day? Oh, by the way, let's go down and look at my old coffee pot. I have got to drive it out to-morrow."

"Coffee pot! Drive it out! Sny, what do you mean?"

"Come along and see," said the strange Sny, flourishing his arms. "We will go down to the stable where they keep it and see if it is in good order." And locking and double locking his door, he stuffed a little piece of paper into the keyhole, and stepped off at such a pace down the stairs that Frank could hardly keep up with him.

They went through the square and down a crooked street until they came to a little courtyard, where huge drays were hauled up under the sheds, and where great Percheron

horses, with their tails braided and ornamented with stripes of blue and red flannel, were peacefully eating out of little mangers in the open air. One or two mottled bulldogs came leaping toward the boys as they entered, but fell away in response to Sny's kind words, and followed him humbly, as if they knew and respected him. A huge rooster, perched on a beam over the horses' heads, set up a cheery crowing from the depths of a dark stable. The lusty bray of an ass came resounding through the shadowy space.

Sny went to the farthest corner of the yard, and there, under a little shed, Frank saw a curious vehicle. It was truly as Sny had described it, a coffee pot,—a huge coffee pot, a boiler mounted on wheels and provided with a furnace in which alcohol could be burned to keep the contents of the huge receptacle hot for a long time.

"There you are," said Sny, pointing to the strange combination. "There is the machine that I have got to drive out to-morrow, according to my contract with the gentleman that owns it, and if I don't see some shooting

before I get back it won't be my fault. This coffee pot here belonged to the American ambulance that operated in Paris during the Prussian siege. It has been under fire several times and never got hit yet, but I reckon its day will come. The man that bought it, after the siege, was very good to me when I was in trouble here a month ago, and I made a promise that if he wanted to run it out to the fighting at any time to furnish coffee to the wounded, I should take charge of it."

"Glory!" said Frank. "Wouldn't I like to go with you!"

"I am afraid that wouldn't do," said Sny. "There is hardly room for two, as you can see, on the front, and if anything should happen to you, your grandpa would never forgive me. You see there are two ways of getting into mischief with this thing. You can get combed down by a shell right where you sit on the front seat, or the coffee pot may get cut in two, and then you will be liable to get scalded to death with fifty or sixty gallons of hot coffee. But I think there is small danger, after all. I shouldn't

like to get captured while I was driving it——"

"That would be romantic," said Frank. "I don't believe they would do you any harm. They would see that you are a non-combatant; they wouldn't treat you like a Communist."

"Yes, they would," said Sny. "They would drink up the coffee first, and shoot me afterward. Don't you believe that they have any softness in their dispositions. Well, sink or swim, survive or perish, I am going to drive this thing out of this yard to-morrow morning at five-thirty! If you want to see the start, you can be here."

At this juncture, the owner of the stable-yard appeared and entered into a long discussion with Sny, presumably in regard to the quantity of coffee to be secured, the time it would take to prepare it, and the best route for reaching the scene of the most active hostilities.

CHAPTER XI.

SNY IN HOSPITAL.

IT was in the great "Tent-Hospital," which the Commune had established in the vast shaded expanse behind the Palais de l'Industrie that Frank and Grandpa Drubal next saw Sny. They had missed him for a week, and the old man had himself made three separate journeys to the house on the windy slope of Montmartre in the hope of finding the boy, in whom he was beginning to take a strange interest. But every day he found the same piece of paper still stuffed in the keyhole as Sny had left it, and each day the resounding knocks which he gave on the black oak door brought no response. Frank and little Will were ready to cry with vexation, and Frank himself had a vague suspicion that Sny's disappearance was connected in some mysterious way with the carrier pigeons, and the mes-

sages which the boy had seen him poring over and experimenting upon in the studio. A chance remark which Grandpa Drubal had let fall had confirmed this fear in Frank's mind, and he reproached himself as if he had been in some unaccountable way connected with, or responsible, for it. So that they were all immensely relieved when, on a Sunday morning, Marcelle came in with a crumpled note upon which Grandpa Drubal, when he had put on his specs, recognized the clerk-like script of Sny.

"Whoop, Frank!" he said, capering around the room as if he had been twenty instead of past sixty; "here is a letter from Sny! Now we shall know all about it."

The two boys began to dance so that they jarred the chandeliers and set all the pendants to twinkling. Grandpa Drubal, by the time he had finished his saltatory exercises, was quite out of breath, and had to settle into an arm-chair to rest a minute before he could read the letter.

These were the contents:

DEAR MR. CORNERS AND FRANK AND WILL:

I am all right except a pretty lively fracture of the collar bone which I got while driving out the coffee pot last week, in the middle of a smart skirmish below the terrace of Saint Germain. It makes me laugh every time I think of the fun that I had, although it hurts my collar bone powerful bad when I do laugh. How I wish Frank and Will had been there to see me cavorting off over the rough ground with the old white mare's tail streaming out behind, and the coffee pot bounding six feet into the air every time we struck a snag. I tell you it was fun alive, and the old mare enjoyed it as much as I did until a bullet struck her in one of the hind legs, and then we had trouble on the half-shell.

You see, I had served out about three gallons of coffee to Communists that were loafing down by the rear, and hangers-on that had no business to have coffee anyway, so I halted and brewed another lot, and the old thing was brimful when I started toward the front, where my beverage would be of some use to the wounded and the tired. Then there came along a fool officer, who insisted on my getting out into the ditch to let some troops go by, and there me and the mare stayed for four mortal hours, both of us ready to swear because we could not get where we could do some good. Next there came along a party of bushwhackers (as we call them out West), regular toughs from Belleville, and they swooped down on the devoted coffee pot like a lot of vultures on a dead ox. I scared them off, told them that I had been sent back to the rear because they suspected the coffee had been poisoned by the Versaillists. They all started and ran away on a dead run, and left the old mare and me unmolested. By and by the troops got past, but I found that I should have to follow at a snail's pace if I stuck

to the main road, so I said, "Jerusalem, this won't do for us! We won't get where this coffee will do the most good before midnight." Then I struck out 'cross lots, and drove through a gentleman's park where there was a wild bull loose. Lucky we didn't have a red flag with us then, I bet you! The bull he kind of sniffed and shook his horns; the old mare she lit out, and we crossed that park in two-forty time, I tell you; jumping ditches seven feet wide. And every time we jumped the coffee went ker-chunk inside the old can, and once in a while it slopped over and ran down my back. Got the marks there now.

Well, my hand is getting tired, and my collar bone aches, and this story is long enough, anyhow. So these lines are just to let you know that I am in the Tent Hospital, same Hospital as the Okolowiczs—three of them, all brave fellows, and wounded pretty bad. My cot is next the biggest of the Okolowiczs. So if you can get time to make a fellow a visit, I should feel highly honored, and remain ever,

Yours truly,

SNY.

P. S.—I reckon I forgot to tell you how I happened to get wounded. You see, in journeying 'cross lots at this slow speed, both me and the old mare lost our heads, and we came pretty near losing our lives, because we got in between the lines, between the Communists and the Versaillists, and there they were both popping away at that coffee pot, and at me, and at the old mare, as the hunters pop at quail in the season right in them same fields. Well, I didn't care much for bullets, and they only sort of tickled the old mare, and made her go faster, but by and by some fool gunner on the Versaillist side beginned to fire shell at us, and that wasn't so pleasant.

I tell you when I saw those biggest shells a-coming, looking first like a sparrow, then like an eagle, and then like a house with a big barn hitched on to it, my heart just got up in my mouth and danced around there, but I knew it wouldn't help to complain, so I kept on going and going. All of a sudden there came a whizz and a bang, and when I got up and scratched my head and looked around, the old hind wheels of the coffee pot had gone in one direction and the old mare and the fore wheels and what was left of the tin contraption had run plumb into the Communist lines, and so my coffee was getting drunk up at last. I shook myself, and then found that I had a break in the collar bone, and that I had to hold myself together and toddle over to the lines as fast as I could. When I got in I just fainted away, and when I knew anything more I was in the ambulance on my way back to Paris. I suppose they'll call me a Communist now, and if the troops from Versailles should happen to come in while I am here it is good-morning to me, as you will all probably find out.

Hoping for your visit, as I said before,

Yours,

SNY.

Grandpa Drubal read this boyish missive through with great eloquence and satisfaction. His eyes twinkled as he read the story of the vicissitudes of the coffee pot guided by the adventurous Sny, and from time to time he stopped to express his admiration of the action of the old mare under difficulties.

"Oh, grandpa! why didn't you let me go, too? It would have been such fun!" said Frank.

The old man laid the letter down and looked gravely at Frank over his spectacles.

"Fun!" he said; "fun to have three or four pails of hot coffee running down your back! Fun to have two or three shells hunting for you all over the pastures and lots! Fun to be laid up in a hospital with blood poisoning and amputation, and two or three other things waiting to get you! What are you thinking of, Frank? I reckon you'd better stay to home until you get a little older!"

"But, grandpa," said Will's sweet voice, "if Frankie had been there perhaps nothing would have happened to either of them: who knows?"

"Well, at least we don't know," said Grandpa Drubal, "so let's drop that. Now, get your hats, boys, and we'll trudge down to the Tent Hospital, as he calls it, and see the hero of the coffee pot adventures."

All the beautiful alleys in the Champs

Elysées were clad in the tender and delicious green of early spring. Streets and roadways were filled with the sweet perfume of the leaves and blossoms; the blue-bloused gardeners were loosening the black earth in the great flower beds inside the dwarf hedges which enclosed the gardens of the café concerts. There was a mild warmth in the breeze, and everything spoke of the joyous incoming of the fine season. As the three passed through the beautifully gravelled spaces, shaded with leaves of horse-chestnuts and of sycamores, and as they watched the groups of merry babies playing under the guardianship of the white-capped and gray-cloaked nurses, it seemed to them almost impossible that civil war, ravenous and horrible, was stalking in the fields a few miles from them.

In the centre of the broad avenue of the Champs Elysées Frank came suddenly upon a face which he remembered, and it inspired him with a certain instinctive loathing, so that he started back as if he had seen a serpent. It was the face of the little man whom he had seen upon the stairs at Montmartre,

and although he had given but one keen glance at the features they had then been so perfectly imprinted upon his memory that now he could not mistake them.

"Why, Frank, what is the matter?" said his grandfather. "You jumped as if you had seen an adder."

"Oh, nothing, grandpa," said the boy. But something told him to turn around, and glancing backward he was startled to observe that the little man, a hunchback, curiously and almost quaintly deformed, was looking after him with an evil smile upon his lips, "as if," the boy thought, "he had me in his grip and wanted to do something dreadful to me." Frank often thought of that meeting in the weeks afterward, and whenever he did think of it he felt that same sensation of repulsion, that nameless repugnance and terror, as if the object which he dreaded were again before him.

He thought it best to say nothing to his grandfather of the little man and the curious circumstance of his encounter on the heights of Montmartre. They hurried along the

smooth walks where the sun and shadow were making checker work on the gravel, and presently they came to a slouching sentinel, who, in demand to their request for the Tent Hospital, motioned to the left with his bayonet and then asked them for a gratuity.

Grandpa Drubal handed out a ten-franc piece with a majestic air, at sight of which the soldier took off his cap, then shouldered his musket, and accompanied them a short distance, leaving them directly at a canvas door, on which was roughly painted, "Hospital. No visitors allowed after four o'clock. No spirits or tobacco to be given to any of the wounded without permission."

"Oh, Frankie!" said little Will, "this is just like a circus. See, you could almost creep under the canvas if the soldier wasn't looking."

Grandpa Drubal lifted up the canvas flap and entered a long corridor of the tent, at the end of which he saw a sweet-faced Sister of Charity awaiting him. This meek and comely personage addressed him in the politest of French, at which Grandpa Drubal drew forth

his old-fashioned tablets, and writing with a great flourish the words, "General Corners from America," handed it to her with an old school bow which would have won the heart of an empress. The Sister of Charity spoke a few words of English (the word "general" was all convincing), and learning that the person called Sny was the object of the general's visit, she conducted him, talking all the time, to the corner where the youth, very pale and much thinner even than before his mishap, lay with his eyes closed and his big hands crossed over his breast.

"Goodness, grandpa! he isn't dead, is he?" said Frank, with a sinking of the heart. And Grandpa Drubal was the least bit startled, but he said stoutly: "No, of course not, Frank; he has just dropped off to sleep."

There was a strong odor of antiseptics, ointments, and liniments, so that Grandpa Drubal looked doubtfully at little Will, and began to question the wisdom of having brought the child into such a place; but everything was clean and wholesome, and the wounded men were evidently well cared for. There was one

dark-mustached, dark-faced, brilliant-eyed officer whose foot had been terribly wounded and was swollen to an immense size. This poor fellow lay looking up at the ceiling, and doubtless meditating that if the regular troops happened in just then he would not have time to make his will.

All these things the boys and the old man noted with quick eyes, while they spoke in whispers and stood close together, waiting for Sny to awake. The Sister had vanished to attend to her numerous duties, and there was an awkward pause of some minutes, for Sny was breathing heavily and did not seem likely to awake just then. But presently he opened his eyes, and when he saw them standing at his bedside, he lifted up his head feebly and made them a sign of recognition; then in a thin voice which sounded as if it came from a long distance, he said: "Well, I see that you all got my letter about the old mare and the coffee pot."

"Yes, Sny," said Grandpa Drubal. "Mighty glad to see that you are alive and kicking, though as to the kicking, I don't

suppose it would be powerful just at this particular moment. But we thought we would run down and let you know that we are in the land of the living, and ready to take you away from here to where you will be safer as soon as you can be moved."

"Oh, that's all right," said Sny, and a little bit of color stole into a corner of his pallid cheek. "Mighty good of you, general; but I'm all right here for a few days. Only if you should happen to hear of the regulars coming you might send me word. I reckon that then I should take up my bed and walk."

"What a nice bed you have got, Sny," said little Will. "Much nicer than that old thing you have up at the studio. I wish you could take it with you when you go away."

"Well, I'm afraid the Comumne might make some objections," said Sny, winking at Frank. "I reckon it means to have a good many occupants in this bed before the war is over, judging from the way it shoves forward troops to be mowed down by the regulars."

"Sho! you don't say so," said Grandpa Drubal. "No kind of soldiers, are they?"

Sny gave him a warning look. "Some of those officers over there speak English," he said, in a whisper.

"Well," said Grandpa Drubal, "I didn't say anything worth being hanged for, I reckon. But how was it, Sny, that you managed to get out of the lines? A military man ought to keep his eye peeled against contingencies like that."

"I know," said Sny, "it was all my fault. I ought to have been killed, I reckon, for being so careless. I suppose the stableman will have no end of trouble in getting his mare back. The Communists are apt to seize her for cavalry, but Lord pity the first man that rides her if she hears any cannon music! If she don't bolt into the enemy's lines with him I don't want a cent."

"Well, you're all right, Sny, I see," said Grandpa Drubal. "Now, promise us that as soon as you can be discharged from the hospital you will come and stay with us, and I will find you plenty to do. Perhaps you would like to go away with us when we leave."

"Oh, yes! Do, Sny!" said the boys in chorus.

"Well, perhaps," said Sny with a long sigh, and closing his eyes as if the vision were too dazzling to contemplate. Then he gave them a quaint account of the manner in which he had been struck down, still more curious and amusing than that which he had written in his hasty letter.

"And now you boys can talk with Sny five minutes," said the old man, "and then you must go. You don't want to talk him to death the first time you see him after he has been hit with a piece of shell, do you?"

Grandpa Drubal tried to slip two or three gold pieces into Sny's hand, but the youth firmly, although pleasantly, declined to receive them.

"No," he said, "you have been mighty good to me, and I don't need them just now. The Commune owes me a residence here until I get well, I reckon. Then, if you can give me some work to do I shall be glad. I will see you all soon."

As the trio retired they noticed a great stir

in the central aisle of the huge tent. A number of red-faced men, in gaudy uniforms, with red sashes about their waists, were going from cot to cot, occasionally making a speech, sometimes entering into conversation with the wounded, and pompously displaying much authority. The Sister of Charity just then happened along with her arms full of bandages, and Grandpa Drubal, making his best bow again, enquired who these potentates might be.

The Sister managed to make him understand that they were a delegation from the Hôtel de Ville who had come to cheer up the wounded and to give them the latest news. While she was speaking to his grandfather Frank saw that the little hunchback, of whom he felt such a horror, was moving along with the delegates, laughing and joking, and was apparently an important member of the company. A shadow seemed to fall across everything as this misshapen monster once more appeared on his path. Who and what he was Frank could not imagine. But he felt convinced that he should see him again and

that he would be associated in some unpleasant, and possibly dangerous, manner with his own existence. The hunchback did not see Frank this time, or feigned not to do so. He went on gesticulating with his thin arms, laughing, and apparently furnishing much amusement to the overfed and bibulous looking personages girt with the blood-red sashes.

. . . . .

A few days later, while Frank and Will were walking under the quaint old arches in the Rue Castiglione, they heard a well-known step behind them, and a cheery voice, which they at once recognized as Sny's, hailed them. "Hold on till the invalid catches up," he said. "Your grandpa told me you were down this way, and I thought I'd follow."

Frank looked up at him with a bright smile, which Sny returned, but it was easy to see that there was some trouble in the big gray eyes.

"What is the matter, Sny?" said Frank, after the first greetings. "Anything happened since you started from the hospital!"

"Say, Frank," queried Sny, "did you notice anything strange about my door last time you were up at the house?"

"Nothing," said Frank. "The piece of paper was in the keyhole, and everything seemed to be all straight."

"Well," said the youth, "everything isn't all straight. The place has been entered, although the gentleman took the precaution to put the paper back in the keyhole. I know somebody has been there and been rummaging about among my things"—and here his voice sank as if he were afraid of being overheard. "What is more, they have carried off some of my things, too."

"Well," said Frank, "it might be expected in such a place as that. You ought to be down with us. Can't you come down today and bring everything that is left with you?"

Sny looked at him for a full half minute before he answered. "Why, don't you see," he said slowly, "I don't care so much about what they have taken, but in these times it might make some mischief. I can't tell yet.

And then my two best carrier pigeons are missing. I left them grain enough to last for a month. They always know where to find water; but they are gone. There has been some foul play, and yet I can't think who could have taken the trouble to spy me out." And changing the subject he began to tell anecdotes of the little campaign in which he had had so brief a part, but Frank could see that he was preoccupied.

"Have you told grandpa what you have just said to me?" asked Frank.

"No, don't say anything to him about it. It don't matter much, and I wouldn't like to worry him with such small affairs. But I'm going to have a hunt after my carrier pigeons, and I'll have them back if I have to go to the headquarters after them."

Frank did not know why at that moment the image of the little hunchback came into his mind, but it made him uncomfortable. And they both came back to the hotel, gloomily vouchsafing no answers to the innumerable questions which little Will poured upon them.

CHAPTER XII.

THE 101ST TO THE FRONT.

A MORNING or two later Grandpa Drubal awoke to find Frank and Will pulling at his hands, and urging him to get up and dress.

"Jules Raisin's battalion is coming to the front this morning," said Frank, "and his cousin Laurette is here and wants to see you."

"Let's see," said Grandpa Drubal sleepily. "That is the young woman that was here the day the Commune was betrayed, and when everybody was in the depths of despair?"

"Oh, they are brave enough this morning. The regulars surprised a part of their forces, Jules says. But no great harm is done; they are more certain than ever that they can take Versailles."

"Do get up, grandpa," said Will, "and come and see the pretty lady with the cocked hat on!"

Twenty minutes later, when Grandpa Drubal came forth from his bedroom, he could not repress a little cry of admiration for the charming *cantinière* or *vivandière*, as she was then called, who stood before him.

Laurette was jaunty and bewitching in this coquettish uniform, which combined the best features of masculine and feminine apparel.

The voluminous dark skirt which reached to the knees only was prettily set off by a dainty apron. Laurette wore leathern leggings, the ends of which were neatly buttoned over stout, but well-fitting, shoes.

Across her jaunty jacket, which was of blue, with a blood-red thread—emblem of the Commune—in it, a tightly rolled blanket was strapped. At her left side was the little keg in which she carried spirits. On her head was the red toque, neatly arranged.

She did not look like one who would snatch the gun from a wounded soldier and take his place in the ranks, as the vivandières of Napoleon I.'s time did now and then. But she was capable of great things. She needed but the inspiration and the occasion.

Citizeness Marcelle was pale as she took Laurette's hand and bade her good-by. "If you see my husband out there," she said, "tell him to do his full duty. And above all, no quarter for the Versaillist prisoners."

"No quarter, Marcelle!" cried Jules Raisin; "don't you know that they would do the same by us!"

"Never mind," said the fierce citizeness. "If my husband were to be the first to fall into their hands, I still would say, 'No quarter!'"

Grandpa Drubal gave many pleasant words to Citizen Jules Raisin and to his charming cousin, Laurette, and he handed to the latter a few gold pieces with which to buy things for the wounded.

After some hesitation Laurette accepted, and insisted upon kissing everybody all round on both cheeks, a proceeding which worried Grandpa Drubal, and made Frank blush.

"Come down and see the old 101st start for battle, General Corners," said Jules Raisin. "Oh, you can all come; there is no danger; everyone knows that you are friends of mine."

And the barber-soldier raised his chin high in air, swelled out his chest, and assumed a fierce yet protecting air, as he preceded the little company to the Place Vendôme.

There the battalion was already assembling. The drummers were tightening their drums: the buglers were trying their bugles, the soldiers, small, thin, and sallow, assumed a kind of slouching order. Laurette stepped into her place behind the buglers. Jules Raisin joined the officers. Presently there would be a drum tap, and then they would "Mar-r-rch on" to Chatillon, to glory—or to death!

"Oh, grandpa," cried Frank, "if we only had our horses saddled, we could ride to the fortifications and see the battalion as it passes out of the gates! Shall I run around to the stables and order them?"

"Yes, yes; let him go, General Corners!" cried Jules Raisin, who was thinking of the additional honor which he would reap among his comrades if the American general "reviewed his battalion" as it marched to the front. And Grandpa Drubal consented.

Frank darted off to the stables, which were

in the Rue Duphot, not far away, but presently he came back with a scared face and stammered:

"Oh, grandpa! our horses have been seized by the Commune! They were 'requisitioned for service,' the livery man says: and if we go to the Ministry of War and make a row we can get them back. Can't we go at once? I don't want to lose my handsome pony!"

"Seized my horses! Why, dog my cats, I reckon we will go and find out what this means!" cried Grandpa Drubal. He had bought the horses, paying a good price for them, and he did not propose to lose them in this way. He resolved, if justice were not given him at the Ministry of War—where General Cluseret, who had lived many years in America, was just then in power—he would lay the matter before the American consul, perhaps before the American minister.

"You shall not lose your horses!" cried Jules Raisin. "Our battalion has to pass by the Ministry of War to receive some instructions. We shall be there at noon. If you will

come there at the same time I will send a note to the Citizen Delegate for War, telling him that he must see justice done."

Then the bugles sounded, the drums beat a long roll, the bugles picked up the marching tune, and away went the 101st battalion, with the crimson flag flying and with the queer little soldiers carrying their guns in every position but the right one.

Grandpa Drubal and Frank, followed by Citizeness Marcelle, carrying Will in her lean arms, went back rather sadly and slowly to the hotel.

"Where is the landlord?" queried the old man. "I should like to know what I owe him."

"Don't trouble yourself about that bill, citizen, until the war of the Commune is over," said Marcelle, with an uneasy laugh. "The landlord, like so many others who do not sympathize with us, has run away."

"Run away!" said Frank. "Why, who is in charge of the hotel?"

"No one. The servants all went yesterday. You will remember that I got all the meals.

We are the only guests in the house, and the landlord is gone."

"Well, I reckon we shan't be long in following him," said Grandpa Drubal. "I can leave with you, Citizeness Marcelle, money enough to cover our bill, and I think I must get these boys into a safer place."

"But, Grandpa Drubal, the fun is only just beginning," said Frank, growing mournful at the thought of being banished from the fighting.

"This is no time to think of money, citizen," said Marcelle, with a dark look on her melancholy face. "Paris may soon be in ashes; its people scattered to the four winds of heaven; its——"

"Think of the child," said Grandpa Drubal sharply, pointing to little Will, who stood with his beautiful eyes filled with wonder, gazing intently at Marcelle.

"True, true, citizen; I had forgot. The child should not hear such things——"

And, stooping down, she kissed Will tenderly on his broad white brow.

"But, say, Marcelle," asked Will, "what

do you mean by making Paris all ashes? Burning it up?"

The citizeness looked quickly at Grandpa Drubal and her face became livid. "Hush, little Will," she said; "Marcelle was only jesting to make thee wonder. Come, and I will tell thee a tale of the old Revolution!"

"Your last story, madam," said Grandpa Drubal to himself, as she disappeared with Will. "These boys will sleep outside the walls of Paris to-night, if my money and strength hold out. And you won't be with them, either."

. . . . .

At noon, Grandpa Drubal and Frank were at the Ministry of War. The fine, old-fashioned edifice, with its heavy stone walls, the windows set in deep arches, and its offices, which looked like the ante-chambers of dungeons, were dirty and neglected.

The crimson banner floated over the archway through which Frank and his grandfather entered the courtyard. One of the battalions which had been engaged in the disastrous fight at Chatillon had just come in.

It was under suspicion of cowardice, and the officers were menaced with court-martial. General Cluseret, the War Delegate for the Commune, had just been examining into the case, and his secretary, who spoke good English, said that he could not be seen.

"Well, then, go in and tell him," said Grandpa Drubal, drawing himself up until he looked about seven feet tall, "that General Corners will not consent to allow his property, sir, to be taken without compensation, sir, and that he will lay the case before the American minister to-day, sir!"

"It would be of no use to tell him that," said the Communist secretary wearily; "he would not listen; he is too busy and full of care. He may be arrested himself at any moment. The Commune is suspicious of him, and the soldiers think he is too severe. See, he will, perhaps, have some of those poor fellows shot for running away. It is his duty; but it will cause his downfall. *Que voulez vous?* He is not dealing with serious people. I, who am an ex-soldier of the regular army——"

"Young man," said Grandpa Drubal, "I want no preachments. I want them horses, or there'll be trouble!"

Something in the decided tone of the old man's voice seemed to impress the ex-soldier of the regular army. "Write your claim, citizen," he said, "and I will hand it to Cluseret myself. If I come back without my ears, I shall look to you for compensation."

The funny French accent with which he said "compensation" set Frank to laughing heartily. But the ex-soldier did not imagine that anyone was capable of making sport of him. So he went away to General Cluseret's office with this note:

General Corners, American citizen, had two horses seized by the Commune for military purposes this morning. He claims that, as a foreigner, his property is not subject to seizure, and he wants the horses returned to him post haste.

In ten minutes an answer came back written on the margin in pencil and in good English:

Verify Citizen Corners's story, and, when proven, hand over the horses to him immediately.

"Whoop, Frank!" said Grandpa Drubal, "Victory for our side!" and Frank danced for joy.

"Citizen La Tourette is your man now," said the ex-soldier, and led them to a lean, lank, cadaverous cavalryman, who was recruiting for the "remount." After some tedious interpretation Frank and his grandfather learned that they would find their horses, the next day, in the stable from which they had been taken.

They thanked the lean gentleman, who told them, through the interpreter, that he had deserted from the regular army, and was therefore, certain to be shot if captured. "But it doesn't hurt much," he said. "Ping! and—there! it is all over! What is the use of thinking about it?"

But Frank noticed that his hand trembled wofully as he held the door open politely for them.

The 101st had arrived, and Grandpa Drubal had just time for another word with Jules Raisin before the order to march came.

Laurette was talking very fast to Frank as

the order arrived, and the boy ran after Jules Raisin to ask what she said.

Jules made her repeat, and then replied:

"Laurette says that if ever you are in any trouble or danger during the war with Versailles, send for Laurette of the 101st, and she will get you out of the scrape."

"I will do it," cried Frank. "Thank her for me a thousand times!" and he kissed his hand to the *vivandière*, as he had seen fine gentlemen kiss their hands to ladies on the day of the panic at the Triumphal Arch.

Laurette saluted him gayly. There was a burst of music, a little cloud of dust; and this time the 101st was off for good. "We will capture a cannon or die," shouted Jules Raisin. And he meant what he said.

CHAPTER XIII.

SNY'S GHOST AND THE SPIES.

GRANDPA DRUBAL had observed with some surprise that each time the subject of his departure from Paris with the boys had been broached in Sny's presence, the tall, gaunt youth had hastened to change the subject.

Nor had he been persuaded, even by the many kindly and urgent invitations of little Will and Frank, to promise that he would accompany them when they turned their backs upon the Commune and its daily tragedies.

At first the old man was inclined to attribute Sny's hesitation to delicacy, and to an unwillingness to make himself in any sense a burden. But presently he came to the conclusion that the young man was in some way bound to remain within the walls of Paris, that he had a mysterious mission which he

could not or would not explain, and that they could not count upon him as a companion. Once or twice he thought he would try to make this clear to Frank, but after a little reflection he gave that up, fearing lest through boyish indiscretion Frank should tell Sny what they were thinking of him.

On the morning after the departure of the 101st battalion, Frank observed that his grandfather was making new preparations for departure, and he felt a pang at his heart as he thought of leaving all these stirring scenes, and parting from the quaint and curious Sny, for whom he was beginning to feel almost a brotherly affection.

It happened that the whole town that morning seemed profoundly tranquil. Not even the scattering musket fire, to which they were becoming so accustomed, was heard in the distance. Thousands of people were abroad, saying little, drinking in the sweet spring air, and rapturously enjoying the temporary freedom from anxiety.

"Grandpa will be darting off at an hour's notice," said Frank, "after he has seen the

consul. I believe I will run up and try to find Sny and make a final effort to get him to go away with us."

Hailing one of the little open carriages coming from the grand boulevards, Frank jumped into it, telling the cabman by a gesture to drive toward Montmartre. He was beginning now to know some French, but he found that the driver understood his gestures better than his language, and in what seemed to Frank an incredibly short time they were entering the small square on the hill. Frank gave the driver at least twice his proper fee, jumped down, and was soon climbing the dark stairs polished with the feet of the thousands who had climbed them during the long generations in the past. The house seemed more tomb-like than ever. Not a sound save the noise of his own footsteps was heard until he pounded at Sny's door with all his boyish vigor, and whistled merrily while waiting an answer. It was some minutes before the key grated in the lock; then the great door swung open, and Sny's thin face appeared. The gray eyes lit up with a

pleasant smile when Sny saw who his visitor was.

"Pop in quick," he said. "Three or four fellows are hunting around to see what they can discover; they may break in here at any time. I have fixed up a reception that I don't think will suit them very well."

Without adding anything to these enigmatical words, he admitted Frank, locked the door, and preceded his visitor into the studio, which to Frank's surprise was quite dark. The shutters were up at the windows which overlooked Paris, and also at that one opening out of the bedroom where Sny kept a curious array of chemicals, of books on mathematics, of bottles of all shapes and sizes, and a heap of mysterious boxes.

"Yes," said Sny rather dryly, drawing himself up to his full height and looking down upon Frank as if he were almost inclined to scold him. "You just happened in at the wrong time, don't you see?"

Frank stammered his excuses. "Fact is, Sny," he said, "we are going away, sure, this time, and I have come to get you. You must

go with us; we can't get along without you. And I think you will be happier with us than you are all alone here."

Sny's great hands came together, and he wrung one with the other carefully for a minute or two as if he were moved by contending emotions. Then he said, rather huskily:

"Maybe you think I wouldn't like to go, but you can just make your mind easy about that. I would rather go with you than to eat my dinner, but fact is I just can't. I can't, and that settles it. I can't leave here at present. And I am bound not to tell you why, either. So if you will just let me off——"

He stopped and looked at Frank with a kind of appeal in his eyes, as much as to say, "Don't question me, or I shall break down."

Frank would have scorned the accusation that he was affected by this simple declaration, but the tears were nevertheless in his eyes.

"Well, grandpa will be dreadfully disappointed," he said, "and of course you know we are. We counted so much on having you

with us in England and Holland, and then we have got to come back here to see about——"

Now it suddenly flashed across his mind that he, too, had a secret, one which concerned others as well as himself, one which he could not divulge to this strange Sny who so appealed to his sympathies—the secret of his lost father, and of their search for him. Yet why should he not tell Sny? Perhaps he might make of him an efficient ally in the search. No, he could not do that without consulting his grandfather, who had already done so much for the children of his wayward son.

"Yes, I understand," said Sny. "You have got a secret, too, I reckon. Everybody has one. But mine is not of any great consequence, only don't you see, Frank, I just can't tell you. And now that you are here, I must ask you again not to say anything about what you see. Just see it and then forget it. Is that a bargain?"

"Of course," said Frank. "Do you take me for a spy?"

"No," said Sny dryly. "But there are spies around. If you stay here long enough

you will see them. And I just kind of reckon"—here he chuckled, as if immensely amused at his thoughts—"that the spies will find something that will amaze them very much. I wouldn't wonder if it kind of tickled their nerves. Now, if you don't want to see some strange doings, you just toddle right straight back to the Rue de Castiglione. But if you want to stay, you must decide quick—for the circus is going to begin."

Frank's eyes twinkled with anticipation. "Can I stay, Sny?" he said. "It would be just glorious to have an adventure."

"Oh, yes, I suppose you can stay," said the youth. "I don't reckon either of us will get hurt. Maybe we will get the laugh on our visitors, too. But if anything should transpire, and they want to lay hands on us, you do just as I tell you, and you will be perfectly safe."

"All right," said Frank. "Ring up your curtain."

"That's the right spirit," said Sny. "I reckon we wasn't born in the American woods to be scared by French owls."

"But what have you got it all darkened up here for, Sny? It would be so much pleasanter to let in the spring air; it is lovely outside."

"Well, now you are getting into a questioning mood, Frank. You will see soon enough what this is for. The first thing we have to do is to collect my birds, and then to get up there." He pointed with his long forefinger to the ceiling.

Frank looked up in amazement. The studio ceiling was very high, and there seemed no way of reaching it except by flying.

"Oh, I will make that all clear in due time," said Sny. "Just come with me now, and bear a hand with the birds."

Frank followed the youth into a little cabinet with a brick tiled floor, and with a small window opening into an inner court. Here Frank heard the soft cooing of the pigeons, and in a minute two or three of them were marching up to him in the bold, aggressive manner of the carrier pigeon, and pecking at his feet as a sign that they wanted something to eat.

"Now," Sny said, "Frank, you grab two of them; I will take care of the others. Mind you don't hurt them; they are valuable property. Never mind if they do peck you, they won't hurt you. Stuff that gray one in your pocket, he's proof against accident. Now take the other one more carefully under your arm. Can't afford to let the Communists steal these as they stole the others."

While he was talking, Sny seized four other birds and bestowed them in his various capacious pockets, none of them venturing to remonstrate. Frank's charges were more difficult, and the one which he had taken under his arm pecked furiously at his bare hand. Seizing a little bag of grain which was hanging from a nail, Sny said, "Now we'll go up."

Frank stared, but followed obediently. They re-entered the studio, and in an angle of the wall Sny pressed his thumb against a flower in the ornamental paper. The door of a closet sprang open. "Hurry in," said Sny. "Those fellows may be here any moment."

Frank hastened in. The door closed behind the boys with a click, and they were in dark-

ness. An instant afterward Sny lighted a match, and, applying it to a little wax taper, enabled Frank to see before them a straight ladder leading up into the recesses of what seemed to be a space between the floor above and the ceiling of the studio.

"Follow this ladder," said Sny, "then turn to the right, lie down and crawl about ten feet till you see a glimmer of light. Then wait for me. You must go first, for I want to make all safe behind."

Frank did as ordered, using great care not to hurt the birds as he squirmed his way through the darkness. Presently he heard a sound, which convinced him that Sny was pulling up the ladder behind him. Just as he was beginning to fear that he had taken the wrong route in the darkness he saw a gleam of light, and came out into quite a large room, nearly six feet high, feebly lighted by a window at the end of a shaft in the masonry of the wall on the side overlooking Paris. This window evidently had no glass in it, for cool air came streaming into the room.

"There," said Sny, "to prevent you from

asking any questions I will just tell you the whole business. Put down the birds, and don't step on them. Now, I will shake out some grain and let old Gray Head and the others have a lunch."

After he had done this and the birds had fallen to eating the grain, as if a change of location was not of the smallest consequence to them, Sny sat down cross-legged on the floor, and by a gesture indicated that Frank was to do the same.

"Now," he said, "we are quite comfortable here. This place, as you can see, is a refuge. It was built during some old dangerous period, and, I suppose, it is easy for you to see that it has been occupied lately. Whether or not the men who hid themselves here in old times liked it or not I can't say, but I have found it very convenient. In fact, the birds and I feel at home here."

"Yes, but, Sny," said the bewildered Frank, "what, in the name of common sense, is the need of your hiding? If you would go with us you wouldn't have any such adventures."

Sny extended his long hand and placed it on Frank's shoulder. "Well, now," he said slowly, with his Western drawl, "we have settled all that down below. You agreed——"

"Yes, I know," said Frank. "Ask no questions. Go ahead: get up your adventure."

"That's the way to talk," said Sny. "Now, sit here and don't move, and let me show you something."

He reached to the side of the wall near which he was sitting and pulled a cord. To Frank's astonishment, a little door opened at their feet, leaving an aperture perhaps fifteen inches wide and nearly as long, showing them the interior of the studio below. "You see we are in communication," said Sny. He pulled another cord and the door shut softly. Then he stooped down and opened a tiny trap in this door. "Just apply your eye there," said Sny. And Frank saw that through this he could observe he studio below while the door was shut.

"Oh, the man that built this observed all

his precautions, as the police say," said Sny. "And yet I don't reckon he was doing anything wrong; but you have to be powerful careful in war times."

"Yes," said Frank, beginning to feel as if he were the hero of a fairy tale.

"Now," said Sny, "I told you my domicile had been invaded, didn't I? Two or three gentlemen connected with the Commune seemed to be anxious to know what I kept up here on the hill. They found some things the other day, but I reckon they won't be able to read them. And I have put the rest of my private documents where they won't be likely to find them before the war is over." Sny chuckled softly to himself. "But as I have learned from certain sources"—he spoke as ceremoniously as if he were dictating a state document—"that they think of paying me another visit to-day about this time, I 'lowed that I would have some fun with them, and I am glad you are here to share in it. What do you think of this, now, for a project?"

And, holding up the wax taper that Frank

might see more plainly, he showed the boy a skeleton, enveloped in a white sheet, all but the skull, the eye-sockets of which were filled with green glass globes, which in the darkness sent forth a grisly and terrifying light. This skeleton was hanging from a wire attached to a pulley set in a little socket directly over the door in the ceiling of the studio.

"What on earth is that?" said Frank. "Where did you get such a ghost-like looking thing?"

"Skeleton," said Sny concisely. "Bought it at a sale in an old curiosity shop over back of Montmartre last winter. Got it for five francs. It will be uncommon useful to-day."

"Why, what do you mean to do with it?"

"Well," said Sny, chuckling again, "when I hear the door open, and the fellows come in below, and before they have a chance to undo the shutters, we'll just lower this gentleman down toward them, and I'll take the responsibility of giving two or three graveyard groans that they won't forget in a hurry. If they stay to hunt for any more of my papers, I have got another scheme. But that's a little more

risky," he added. "I think the ghost business is the safest."

Frank laughed so loudly that Sny clapped his hand over the boy's mouth, "Steady," he said. "We must not let them find out that we are up here. This is our retreat in time of need."

"Are you safe here from them, Sny?" said Frank anxiously.

"Oh, yes, they couldn't find me here in six months. Besides, there is a way out that I haven't told you of."

"But you would have to go out some time or other, Sny, and then they might be watching for you in all directions."

"Not in the one that I should take," said Sny, with such an air of confidence that Frank pushed the matter no farther. After a little Sny pulled up the door, and lying down so that he could look in all directions in the studio, he seemed to forget Frank's presence and to be concentrated on his watch for the enemy's appearance. At the end of five minutes he looked up.

"They generally get around here about

eleven," said Sny. "I think they believe I am always out then, and they will make a visit in a few minutes if they are coming. It must be on the stroke of eleven now."

"It was long after ten when I started up here," said Frank.

"Yes," said Sny. "Hush! I can hear the door. They are coming. Now do just as I tell you. Now, where in the name of time did they get a false key to my rooms? Sh-h! Hear them! Lie down flat, Frank, and take a look. Hold your breath and don't speak to me. For that matter, you can't speak if you hold your breath."

Frank felt that he was at last engaged in a real adventure. What would Grandpa Drubal have said had he known that his grandson was hidden in a secret apartment, in a gloomy old mansion on the height of Montmartre with the adventurous Sny, and with some prospect of a lively encounter with enemies whom neither of them had ever seen?

Despite Sny's injunction to hold his breath, Frank breathed heavily, and could hardly refrain from shouting when he heard steps in

the anteroom, and saw two figures suddenly come out of the door and stand gazing at the darkened studio, talking in low voices to each other.

Sny gave Frank a precautionary pinch, then put his mouth close to the boy's ear and whispered gently, "Now I am going to let down the ghost and groan. I will do a big bass groan, and you join in with a treble one. Mind you don't laugh. If you do, we are perhaps in for six months in prison. Remember now!"

Sny rose up and reached a cord which Frank had not before observed, and slowly lowered the skeleton to the open door in the floor, pulled its extemporized draperies around it so it would pass through, and then in silence let it down, down, down, until it was within six or seven feet of the floor. Then pulling it up a little, and letting it waver down once more, he uttered a heart-rending groan suggestive of graveyards at midnight and of mystic houses haunted by the secret of some hideous crime.

Frank wanted to laugh, but he felt that

he would be endangered by doing so, so he straightened his face and groaned in such piteous feminine fashion, ending with a little shriek of terror, that Sny patted him on the back and whispered, "Good boy!"

The two conspirators, Sny holding the cord so that he could pull up the ghost at an instant's notice, lay down and carefully observed the scene in the room below.

After muttering something which was probably an exclamation of surprise at the darkened room, one of the intruders was moving over to the windows to open the blinds, when a loud shriek from his companion caused him to look hastily around and to see the ghost.

As soon as Sny was sure that the attention of both was engaged by this spectre, he let it dance slowly up and down in the air, and at regular intervals again emitted the groans.

The two men stood gazing at each other, pointing at the ghost and at the flames in its eyes; then, without uttering a word, they turned and rushed from the room, and the clatter of their heels resounded on the loose boarding of the anteroom.

Frank felt Sny's big hand upon his back. "Don't laugh yet, Frank," he said, "or you'll spoil everything. They might get their courage back, you know; and then again they might leave the door open as they ran away and somebody else might come in. We must be cautious."

In complete silence they waited at least ten minutes for the result of their manœuvre. Presently Sny said: "Now, I'll pull up the ghost, close the door, leave you here, and go down and reconnoitre."

"All right," said Frank, bursting into a genuine laugh, which he felt it was useless longer to try to control. "I will stay here with the birds, and you be careful not to get caught now, Sny, or I might never be able to get out of here."

Sny, who was just shutting the door, after putting the ghost back on his airy perch, turned and looked at Frank.

"That's so," he said; "there might be an ambush, and here you would be not knowing the way out. What a fool I am! Yes, we must go down together and take the chance.

Leave the birds here; I will attend to them later."

The return journey to the studio was accomplished without accident. A secret spring opened the door from the little closet on the inside in the same way as from the outside. Frank was not sorry to find himself back in the large room, but it was with a beating heart that he awaited the result of Sny's visit to the doorway. There was no ambush; the fright had been genuine. The spies had fled, and had forgotten to close the door behind them.

After locking the door and replacing the paper in the keyhole, Sny hailed Frank. "That was a good ghost," he said; "it has done the work. Now help me to put this big bar against the door, so we cannot be interrupted for half an hour, and at the end of that time I defy them to find out anything about me."

Frank did as he was requested. Then under Sny's orders he helped to convey various mysterious packages into the secret passage, and from thence into the room between the two floors.

An hour later, perspiring but triumphant, Sny threw himself into an old armchair in the studio, and, looking at Frank with a gleeful expression, said: "Now we can take away the bar, unlock the outer door, and then the whole official Commune is welcome to come in. It never can find what we have laid away. But I don't reckon they'll ever come back. Perhaps they will send some of their comrades in the hopes that they may get a visit from the ghost. We must think about that. And now since the coast is a little clearer, we can go down and see your grandpa, and I'll get him to let me off from going with you, because I can't, I really can't, you know."

"I hope you have not got to live up in that hole much of the time, Sny," said Frank, whose little adventure had not heightened his appetite for burrowing between the walls of ancient mansions.

"Oh, there are many worse places than that;" said Sny, "and the great thing is, when you are trying to do something, to carry it out——" Here he bit his lips, and seemed to regret having said so much. "Let's just

forget all about it now," he said; "and, of course, you will not let it go any further, Frank."

Frank thought how delightful it would be to tell little Will the story, and of the many questions the little fellow would bring to bear upon him if he could tell. But there was something delightful in the fact that he could not, and he consoled himself with that every time during the next two or three days that he was tempted to recite the tale to his small brother.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BLOW FROM THE DARK.

IT was half-past two before Grandpa Drubal and Frank were in the vicinity of the American consulate. Everything which the old man had seen that day had determined him to remove the two boys from Paris at once.

But first he would see the consul and tell him his story, that search for his son might go on, in case he were not able to return to Paris.

A chill fell upon his heart when the pleasant-voiced servant at the consulate door told him that the consul had not been at his office that day, and would not be there until late in the afternoon of the following day. It seemed as if fate were conspiring against Grandpa Drubal.

He took a sudden resolve. He would drive to the consul's house in the hope of finding

him there. If that failed, he would go to the minister. Meantime Frank could remain with Marcelle and Will.

He hailed an open carriage. The Commune had not yet laid its paralyzing paw upon the Jehus of the capital.

"I must see the consul at his house, Frank; but, first, I will take you home to the hotel. Jump in. You must look after Will till I come back."

"All right, grandpa; I'll see that he gets into no mischief. But I would rather walk home. I know the way, and it isn't five minutes' walk."

"But, Frank, these are dangerous times, and if anything should happen——"

"You know, Grandpa Drubal, that no one will even look at me. Don't be gone long, for it's lonesome without you, and Marcelle tells such creepy stories."

So he darted off in the direction of the hotel, with the sublime confidence of boyhood that everything will come out all right, and Grandpa Drubal, writing out the home address of the consul, which he had obtained

from the pleasant-voiced servant, showed it to the *cocher*, who grinned, and soon whirled the old man out of sight of his grandson.

When Frank reached the main boulevards and tried to cross there, on his way back to the Rue de la Paix and the Place Vendôme, he found his route blocked by a monster funeral procession.

Several high officers and many soldiers of the "Federated National Guard" had fallen in the fight at Chatillon, and the Commune had decided to give them a splendid funeral, cunningly planning it so that it should be a demonstration before the eyes of the hostile "aristos" of the strength of the insurrection.

The Commune disdained religious services, and would not have its dead taken into a church. A memorial meeting, with fiery speeches, which breathed forth vengeance, was held at the Beaujon Hospital, where the dead had been brought.

Then the most richly decorated hearses of the great company of the Pompes Funebres—the wholesale funeral establishment which undertakes to bury you in pomp for six thou-

sand francs or in poverty for six francs and a half—were requisitioned, and in these the bodies of sixty of the slain soldiers and officers were placed.

Thousands of soldiers followed these stately funeral cars as they descended the steep hill from the Beaujon Hospital, and wound their way into and along the central boulevards.

Tens of thousands of spectators at windows, under café awnings, in carriages, had gathered to witness the procession.

They understood the Commune's declaration of its force, and their faces grew hard and grim as the great corps of trumpeters preceding the cars played solemn airs.

The mockery of the irreligious funeral appalled them, but they dared not cry out against it.

After the procession had passed there was a blockade of carriages and military transportation wagons, and it was half an hour before Frank could safely make his way across the boulevard.

Running head down, and dodging in and out among the teams, he did not notice that

he had entered a street which led him away from, rather than into, the Rue de la Paix and the Place Vendôme.

Alarmed at the long delay, and fearing that Grandpa Drubal would get home first and hunt for him, he ran briskly forward. Presently he came to a stone staircase which led into a narrow alley. He fancied that beyond this he saw the top of the Column Vendôme, and bounded on ; but soon he saw that he was mistaken.

After wandering in a labyrinth of dark and gloomy streets for some time and growing faint with vexation and fatigue, and alarmed at the ominous glances cast at him, he came upon a square in which stood two handsome market pavilions.

He crossed the square, entered another winding street, came to a church, and finding a side door, level with the street, swinging open, he went in in the hope of getting a few minutes' rest and collecting his scattered senses.

A furious yell startled him as he entered. He looked up in amazement, and saw that

several hundred females, dressed like market-women, were applauding a red-faced man in uniform who stood in a sculptured pulpit high up above their heads, and was wildly ranting.

. . . . .

Meantime, Grandpa Drubal, having learned that the consul had gone with the minister on some official errand to the Prussian lines, and that neither could be seen in Paris for at least two days, returned, rather dejectedly, in his carriage to the boulevards.

There he, too, was delayed for a long time. Dismissing his carriage, he managed to get into the Rue de Castiglione by a wide circuit. The Place Vendôme was newly barricaded—a bit of preparation which struck him as indicating that a battle was at hand.

As he crossed the threshold of the hotel, he was surprised to find the office where the concierges or janitors usually sit occupied by a party of soldiers, who were playing at cards and drinking red wine.

Their backs were turned to him. A fear seized upon him as he went hastily up the stairs to the dining-room, from which came

sounds of ribald laughter, of songs and dancing.

Grandpa Drubal stopped in astonishment. Had he made a mistake in the entrance? Surely there were no soldiers quartered there when he left. Now the house was full of them! He saw a Phrygian cap, and heard the clink of a sabre on the stairs above. Had the soldiers seized his apartments also? Where were Marcelle and Will and Frank?

He called Frank's name loudly twice. No answer. Then he called, "Will, Will! where are you?"

No answer. Nothing but the jingling of spurs and the sound of hoarse voices.

The old man's limbs trembled as he reached the door of his own apartments on the third floor and rang the bell. Surely Will would come bounding to meet him!

There was a long delay. At last the door was opened by a sleepy-looking soldier who smelled of wine and onions, and who, when Grandpa Drubal pushed past him, caught him with one dirty claw and tried to hold him.

But Grandpa Drubal brushed him off as if he were a fly.

When he reached his own bedroom he at first refused to believe the evidence of his senses. There on his bed lay three drunken soldiers, snoring in concert! Half a dozen others were on the floor in various attitudes indicative of extreme fatigue. One of them had his head bound up with a blood-stained rag.

"*Eh ben! Quoi qu'il veut, ce chameau de citoyen la?*" said the soldier who had admitted him, balancing himself drunkenly on his feet. "Another inspector—or what? Can't he let honest soldiers of the Commune sleep in peace, after three days of hard fighting. *Allons!* You're not wanted here. Get out!"

Grandpa Drubal, as the soldier approached him, put out his elbow and shot the poor wretch against the wall in a heap.

"Will!" he cried, in a despairing voice. "Will! Frank! Marcelle!"

He wandered through the five rooms in the suite, but not a trace of Marcelle or of Will

or Frank, of the baggage or clothing, or of anything save his large trunk, which had been opened, and in which his things were tossed about in confusion, was to be found.

They were gone! Had Marcelle fled and taken Will with her?

He leaned against the wall and tried to think. The drunken soldier had recovered his balance, and was approaching him with a pistol in his hand.

Grandpa Drubal struck down the pistol, felled the soldier with a terrible blow, and staggered out upon the stairway, still crying, hoarsely:

"Will! Marcelle! Frank!"

No answer.

Perhaps they were in the dining-room. Yes, yes, that must be it. As there were no servants in the house, Marcelle had been compelled to wait upon the soldiers, and she had taken Will with her to keep him in safety.

He burst open the doors of the dining-room, and strode in.

A party of soldiers had cleared away the tables and was dancing *en ronde*, a rude sort

of country dance, and singing in unison with the measured beat of their heels on the polished wood of the floor.

The air was heavy with the smell of wine and tobacco and spirits. Two drunken men were stretched on the floor in a corner.

"Will! Marcelle! Frank!" cried Grandpa Drubal. And his heart sank within him. They were gone, gone!

A soldier, whose eyes were heavy with liquor, caught Grandpa Drubal by the shoulder and pushed him toward the ring of dancers.

It opened to receive him, then closed again, while the men continued the rude dance, shouting like demons.

Grandpa Drubal threw up his hands; his legs gave way; he fell heavily forward.

One of the soldiers picked him up and put him on a chair. His head drooped; he had fainted.

But the dance went on, with more stamping and shouting than before.

CHAPTER XV.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

THE gloom in the corner of the church where Frank stood was so great, by contrast with the keen light of the street from which he had just come, that he fancied himself unseen by the throng of menacing old women moving to and fro in front of the carved pulpit. He felt a sense of security in this surrounding darkness, and, in spite of his woful position, the curiosity of a lively boy asserted itself, and he studied the singular scene with interest.

Evidently this was not a crowd of worshippers. Although Frank understood but little that was said, it was easy to see that the men and women were agitated by violent passion; that their speech was angry and profane; that there was no reverence in their mood. The red-faced man in slouching uniform, who leaned upon the exquisitely carved

wooden rail of the pulpit, seemed excited with drink. His voice was thick and husky. His gestures were fevered and violent, and now and then what seemed to be a sally of coarse wit brought out a rude laugh from the creatures gathered below.

And what creatures they were! The women of the Central Markets, the great Halles where Paris goes for its daily provisions, a delegation evidently recruited from the lower orders of these market-women. As they stood with their brawny arms akimbo, their flushed faces working with the excitement of the occasion, and one or two of them with cigarettes at their lips, Frank thought he had never before seen so strange and repulsive a company. They raved, they shouted, they screamed in concert; they stamped their feet and shook their hands high in the air when the red-faced man poured down upon them the torrent of his eloquence, which seemed to be of a political turn.

Long slanting rays of the summer sunshine fell through the high windows at the back of the church, and made a kind of subdued glory

around the marble figures on the altar; but there was no priest to be seen in the whole edifice; no kneeling figures bowed their heads at the entrance of the chapels, and no pious hum of worship could be heard in any corner.

Frank had stumbled into one of the famous "clubs" of the Commune, and was at that moment listening, although he had but a dim notion of it, to a violent harangue against the leaders of the insurrection, in which the red-faced man was proposing to the women of the Halles that they should march to the Hôtel de Ville and expel from their office the incompetents who had failed to gain victory in the recent battles around Paris.

These clubs were the centres of most of the stormy discussions which finally brought about the worst outrages of the Commune. No sooner was the great insurrection in full blast than the churches were closed to public worship, and throughout the great city every quarter had in a church its club modelled after those of the old Revolution, and quite capable of repeating the cruelties which disgraced the city in 1793.

Many of the orators in these clubs were simple laborers with no education, and with entirely original views of government and society. Their chief and constant demand was that wine and food should be cheaper, if not entirely free, to the laboring masses, and their most ardent desire was that the rich should be made to give up their possessions, and possibly their lives.

Frank's quick wit showed him that something of this kind was going on. He had seen the wild gestures, the fiery looks, and heard the loud-mouthed declamation of these leaders of the insurrection often enough, and made up his mind that this meeting was no place for him. Just as the women were shouting and shrieking in most unearthly tones at some more than usually wild statement of the orator, Frank stepped out from the dark shadow of his corner, and was stealing lightly toward the door, still gazing backward at the company, when he ran into the arms of a huge virago, who first boxed his ears for his blunder, and then seized him by the collar, taking a sharp look at him, after

which she dragged him, with a force which he could not resist, toward the centre of the meeting.

Frank felt that the moment for a supreme effort had come. His blood boiled at the thought that he was not strong enough to get away from this old harpy, whose clutch became each instant more hateful to him. He made one tremendous bound, almost flooring his captor, but at this the woman set up a loud yell, which at once brought half a dozen companions around her, each one contributing her shouts of surprise and laughter to the general hubbub.

"What have you got here, Manon?" said one of the women, catching Frank by the chin and turning his face up to the light. "A pretty boy, as I'm alive. Is he yours?"

At this question the laughter was resumed with such violence that for half a minute nothing else could be heard, but when it fell away, Manon's voice shrilly said:

"What have I found? A spy, I think. The little wretch tried to run over me as if he had been a coach and four, but I soon stopped

that. A spy, I tell you! Look at him; he's no Frenchman! Why, the color in his cheeks alone would betray him for a Prussian!"

Manon gave Frank a new shaking, so much more vigorous than the first one that the boy began to be afraid his head would fall off. He revolted in earnest now.

"Let me go; let me go, you old thing!" he cried. "I never saw you before and I never want to see you again! Let me go; I want to go home!"

This time he struggled so fiercely that he wrenched Manon's hand from his collar.

"See! see!" cried the woman; "he talks German to us. He has the audacity to talk his filthy language to us!" and she stretched forth a fist, red from constant immersion in cold water,—for she was a fishwife,—and shook it in the boy's face.

Frank had caught the word "Prussian," which he had heard so often of late that it was not difficult to distinguish it in French, and he began to appreciate the gravity of his situation. For in those days to be accused as a Prussian spy was to be in deadly peril; in

danger, perhaps, of being hanged at the first lamp-post, with twenty infuriated creatures yelling at one's feet; or to be thrown into the river, or to be mercilessly beaten and obliged to run for one's life.

The boy had seen one or two cases of this kind during his brief experience of the Commune, and he knew that he must now put on a bold face.

So he spoke up loudly, saying: "I am no Prussian! I am an American, and I want to go away from here. I don't know anything about your affairs; I only came in here to see the church. Let me alone!"

This last exclamation was forced from him by the grip upon his jacket of a dozen hands, and before he could make any remonstrance he found himself hurried along toward the door, receiving, as he went, heavy blows, any one of which would have floored him had he not been held up by the grip of the captors.

He continued to shout and protest, feeling that if he were pushed into the street it was all over with him, for he had heard of the fury of the market-women. As they came to

the huge curtain of padded leather, which overhung the side entrance to the church, and while they were thrusting it aside, he made one final appeal, which brought about another shaking from his tormentors, and then the combined influences of the fatigue of the morning, the excitement of his search for the hotel since he had lost his way, and the peril he was in, overcame him, and all was a blank.

. . . . .

"*Holà!* What is all this about, my gossips; my sweet charmers of the fish market?" cried a strong, hearty voice, which seemed to dominate the general clamor. "Hands off, I say! Have you nothing better to do than to beat a poor boy half to death? Why, there isn't one of my drunken troopers who would dare to raise his hand to a boy of that size if I were within a mile of him! Hands off, I say! Must I draw on you, women as you are?"

The tone of authority and the jingle of arms intimidated the women a little. Some of them fell back, eyeing the new-comer as wolves eye the person who beats them off from their prey, and evidently intending to

DOMBROWSKI RESCUES FRANK FROM THE FISH WIVES

spring upon it again at the first chance offered.

"Who is this Jack in Boots?" said Manon's coarse voice. "What does he want here with his spurs? Why isn't he fighting the Versaillists?"

"Yes, yes!" came in chorus from the women. "Perhaps he is another spy."

"Out of the way, Mr. Puss in Boots," said Manon. "We're going to duck this spy; this sneaking, crawling little eavesdropper, who has been sent by the Prussians to find out what we have been saying in our clubs!"

The new-comer was a good-looking, vigorous man of forty-five, dressed in the uniform of a general of the Commune, a fact which might have intimidated the market-women had they not been so blinded by their anger that they hardly noticed the insignia of his rank.

He wore a crimson sash and a handsome sabre, which he seemed half inclined to draw in defence of poor Frank, whose face elicited his sympathy.

"Well, women," he said, "I have heard that you were terrible to meet, but I would

not have believed you would attack a child. Are you wolves or women? Whichever you are, give me the boy within a minute's time or I will send a file of soldiers here to carry you all off to St. Lazare!"

One of the younger women set up a shrill whistle at this, and raising her two arms above her head, shook them defiantly at the general, shouting:

"Send along your uniformed flunkies, and we'll duck them with the spy, and you too, whoever you are, unless you stand out of the way."

"Yes, yes, out of the way!" shouted the chorus of harpies.

At this there was a sudden flash of light, which, as Manon confessed afterward, seemed completely to blind her, and the next instant she felt a violent shock. When she recovered her senses she found the general had drawn his sword, which doubtless explained the flash which so alarmed her, had wrested the poor boy from his enemies, and was now standing in front of him, ready at all hazards to act as his defender.

"Spy, you idiots!" said the general. "Do you suppose the Prussians, who have long ago ceased to take any interest in your silly quarrels, would send a boy of fourteen, and not even old enough to do military duty in Paris, to run the risk of being torn into shoestrings by such silly old women?"

This last phrase so excited the harpies that they refused to listen, and only screamed and shouted.

The general, still keeping his sword pointed toward the most advanced of the feminine company, finally succeeded in making himself heard again:

"Listen!" he shouted in his vibrating tones, which seemed to command attention. "If one of you stirs in her tracks, she will find that I mean at all hazards to have this boy safe! Back to your club, for there you can do no harm. Your cackle is of small consequence to us, who do the fighting to save your silly necks! Back, I say, or I'll have the Committee of Safety after you in an hour!"

Just at this juncture appeared the red-faced

man, who had cautiously descended from the pulpit on hearing the clamor.

"What's this about?" he asked. As he caught sight of the general his jaw fell, and a troubled look overspread his coarse features.

"Dombrowski!" he stammered; "the general! Why is he here? Silence, women! Do you know who this man is?"

"Yes, he's Puss in Boots!" cried Manon, "and he is protecting a spy, and it shall be worse for him if he doesn't give him up!"

"Nonsense, woman!" said the red-faced man; "you will be in St. Lazare before you say ten words more! He is the general!"

Then approaching Manon, he whispered: "It is the general—General Dombrowski. He hates clubs because he thinks they try to dictate to the army. He would like nothing better than to have a quarrel with us. You had better retreat, give up the boy, and say nothing."

Manon received this in sulky silence, which indicated that she bowed to superior authority, and made some mysterious gestures to her comrades which caused them at once to with-

draw into the church, leaving poor Frank, still quite unconscious, leaning heavily upon the arm of the general, who supported him entirely, while he sheathed, with his disengaged hand, the sword which had been so effectual in the boy's liberation.

The soldier gave a long and careful look at Frank, murmuring to himself:

"This is no German, nor is he a Frenchman either. Some poor stranger who stepped into that den out of curiosity. I must have his name and quarters, and he must have help at once. He looks deathly ill."

The general shook Frank and blew in his face, trying to reanimate him by the only means he had at hand.

Frank opened his eyes, looked wildly around, and gave a terrified stare at the general. Then he started to run away, but he found the soldier's strong arms around him.

"Stop a bit, my boy. You are not strong enough yet. Ah! there is a wine merchant's yonder, with a little table under the awning. Come and sit there a moment with me; you need to bathe your face and to drink some-

thing strengthening. You have had a narrow escape, my boy, from a much more intimate acquaintance with water than you are going to get now."

Frank was too exhausted and disturbed to make any answer. It seemed to him as if the ground receded from beneath his feet, and as if the tall houses bowed to him when he looked at them. He leaned heavily on his new friend's shoulder, and together they went toward the wine merchant's.

"Who are you? What are you? Where did you come from? How came you among those she-wolves?" asked the general.

These questions were asked slowly and kindly, and Frank understood almost all his new acquaintance said, but when the answer came it was in English.

"All I know," said Frank, "is that I went in there to rest, and they all pitched on to me. I suppose they took me for a German. I wish I had given that big red-faced woman a crack in the back, that's all I know!" and he felt like fainting again.

"Very well," said the general, now speak-

ing in clear, correct English, but with a certain accent: "I knew you were no German, and if I am not mistaken, you are from the other side of the great big sea. Is it not so? I thought so."

Then they sat down together.

CHAPTER XVI.

FRANK FEELS THE BLOW.

THE kind words, the protecting attitude, and the friendly offices of the general brought Frank into condition again, and with the return of his courage and spirits came the thought:

"I must hasten home. What will Grandpa Drubal and little Will think of me for staying away so long?"

Then he remembered that he was lost, that he had tried in vain to find his way out of the labyrinth of streets, each one of which seemed, with its tall white stone houses, with their queer old balconies and huge sculptured doors, to resemble the other.

He rose impetuously, saying:

"I must go to the hotel. They are waiting for me. I lost my way. Could you direct me to the Place Vendôme?"

The general gave a cheery shout of assent.

"To the Place Vendôme!" he repeated. "My headquarters are there! Come along, my boy, and if your hotel is in that neighborhood, you will soon be among your friends."

It now seemed to Frank that the sun shone more brightly. He felt his old gayety returning, and a kind of pride, in having been rescued by so great a man as the Communist general evidently was, awoke in his breast. What a story it would be to tell little Will, and how jealous it would make him!

"Come with me," said the general. "My name is Dombrowski. I am a general, just now, under the Commune. There have been others in my place before me, and," he added, "there may be others soon rising to replace me. Our heads are not very safe on our shoulders in these troublous times, I can tell you."

Frank looked at him with eyes big with enquiry.

"No, I do not mean that they will cut our heads off as they did in the old Revolution. But the shoemakers and butchers who conduct the military game at the Hôtel de Ville

are very fond of replacing a general if he does not gain a new victory every day. So my glory may be of short duration. But I am glad that it has enabled me to be of some service to you."

He smiled so pleasantly and spoke with such sympathy that Frank's heart quite warmed toward his new friend. They went rapidly through several gloomy old streets, into which the sunshine could scarcely send its bright rays, so narrow and tortuous were they; and presently they came out into the Place Vendôme, at which Frank set up a shout of delight.

"Here," said the general, pointing to the right, "are my headquarters. They have been here for a week; to-morrow they may be in the saddle, but if you like to come to see me here, you can tell me the rest of your story at your convenience."

Frank blushed, and hastened to beg his new friend's pardon for not having explained more carefully who he was.

"I would not have you think," he said, "that, after all, I might be a spy."

"No," said the general; "your American face and your English accent are sufficient guarantee against that. I like your looks, and should be glad to see more of you."

"If you will only come with me to the hotel," said Frank, "I should be glad to have you know my brother and our grandfather, who is here with us. Perhaps you may have seen him already; he was at the great review at the Hôtel de Ville the other day, and," added Frank, smiling as he remembered the episode, "the troops, who heard he was an American general,—he was called so because he was once in the Civil War,—cheered him several times."

"Indeed," said the general, with an amused smile. "I have nothing to do for the moment, and will walk to your hotel with you. It may be as well, for I do not know who has perhaps followed us from the church."

In a few moments they were at the door of the hotel in the Rue de Castiglione. Frank uttered a cry of dismay and started back as he saw that the door was filled with a group

of slouching, ill-kempt soldiers; and as he heard the sound of noisy singing within, the general looked at him enquiringly.

"I am sure this is the place," said Frank, staring about; "but it seems all changed. There were no soldiers here when I went away this morning. And where is the office? The door is shut."

His heart sank and his voice faltered.

"Let us go upstairs," he said, "and find Grandpa Drubal. He is sure to be in our rooms."

The quiver in the boy's voice brought a new sympathy into the general's face.

"Something has happened," he muttered in French. "Some mischief of the Committee of Safety, I suppose. It is lucky I am with him."

They pushed past the soldiers, who hardly noticed the general, and none of them saluted him, and hurriedly climbed the stairs. Frank shouted and knocked at the door of their rooms. There was no answer. Then he pounded vigorously on the door, crying out in turn for Grandpa Drubal, for little Will,

for Marcelle, but still no response. Frank turned a frightened face to the general.

"Can't you do something, sir?" he said. "I don't know what this means."

The general made no answer, but applied his fists to the door to such good purpose that presently the key turned in the lock and a frowsy soldier put out his head.

"What is it, citizen general?" he said, in a drunken voice. "Must we go to fighting again? Our battalion has had no sleep for three days, and we must get some rest."

"Why, they are gone!" cried Frank. "They surely would not be in there with those soldiers. What does it mean?"

And in spite of his determination to be brave, the tears began to run down his cheeks, and he looked from right to left like an animal compelled to stand at bay.

The general pushed past the soldier without ceremony and Frank followed him into the ante-room of the parlor where Grandpa Drubal was always to be found when at the hotel. He found no signs of little Will; no

evidence of their belongings. Even their baggage had vanished.

"Are you sure," said the general, "that these are the rooms which you occupied."

"Quite sure," said Frank. At this point his feelings overmastered him and he leaned against the half open door and began to cry.

"Come, come!" said the general, "you must muster your courage. Something has happened here. We must find out what it is."

The grumbling soldier who had opened the door now showed such a strong inclination to shut it that the general led the poor boy into the passage, and, asking him to sit down on the top stair, drew from him, with much kindness and gentleness, his whole story.

When Frank had finished the recital, not without many sobs, which would come in spite of his desire to preserve a manly dignity, the general took the boy's hands in his and said:

"I thought that mine had been a life of adventure, but surely I never had so much trouble and such a varied experience, when a boy, as you are having. Strange! You go out

for a call on your consul with your grandfather; you separate from him in the street; you lose your way; when you try to get home to the hotel where you have left your little brother, you narrowly escape drowning at the hands of a lot of market women; you fall into the care of an old soldier who shows you the right road to your hotel, and when you get there everything is changed; your grandfather and your little brother are gone, and the house is filled with soldiers! Strange!"

"But they must be here," said Frank. "Let us look in all the other rooms." The general shook his head dubiously.

"We will do so, my boy," he said. "But the occupation of this house by these troops, the absence of the landlord, the apparent flight of the servants, all indicate——"

He paused, as if afraid that what he was about to say might cause the boy more pain.

"And if they have gone away," said Frank, "somebody must have seen them go. If these soldiers know nothing about it, the neighbors surely must have some information to give us."

"Hum!" said the general; "there are no neighbors in Paris. The person who lives next door to you in your hotel would not feel like volunteering any testimony, if he felt convinced you had been murdered in your room. Besides, this quarter of Paris is almost deserted now. Thousands of the inhabitants ran away when the first fighting began. Yet we will go and ask a few questions."

So, after climbing the stairs to the other stories of the house, and knocking at the door of each apartment, and finding nobody except here and there a sleepy soldier whose invariable response was that his battalion had been told to occupy the house, they went downstairs and into the street. No neighboring door was open, but after walking a few yards toward the Place Vendôme they found a swarthy merchant of Algerian curiosities seated within the shadow of his doorway, gravely smoking a cigarette, and looking with melancholy eyes at his small stock, which no one came to examine.

The general questioned him for some minutes, without learning that he had ever heard

of the hotel so near him, before turning away with a jingle of his spurs which seemed to indicate his annoyance.

"It is quite useless, my boy," he said. "You have yourself told me that you think there were no other guests but your party in the hotel. Your grandfather and your little brother may have been simply expelled by some over-zealous officer. We must hunt for them in other hotels, and then make enquiry at the consulate; for you must remember that, if you are hunting for your friends, they are also by this time alarmed at your non-appearance and searching for you."

"Where can they have gone?" cried Frank, with grief and impatience in his tones. "They can't have disappeared into the air; and it is only two or three hours since I left them there!"

He pointed to the hotel, and there was so much trouble in his young voice that the general felt his own eyes grow dim, and, placing his hand paternally on the boy's shoulder:

"Whatever has happened to them," he

said, "you shall not lack for a friend so long as Dombrowski lives! Let us now go to the few other hotels which remain open, and then to the Consulate."

Frank sighed pitifully, and gave a backward regretful glance at the balconies of the hotel, as if feeling still certain that Grandpa Drubal and little Will must appear upon one of them and beckon to him to come up. Then he followed his new friend. Every moment the sense of dread and apprehension seemed to increase and to spread a gloom over the future.

At the end of two hours' close and careful search, in the hotels and at the Consulate, they were no wiser than before. It was evident that Grandpa Drubal had not taken lodgings in any of the many houses ordinarily frequented by strangers. Neither had he returned to the Consulate. The consul himself had not been there, and the only suggestion made by the clerks was that, "the old gentleman and the little boy must have gone into private lodgings."

In his heart the general felt convinced that this was not so. But he left Frank that hope.

A suspicion had arisen in the general's mind that the old man might have fallen a victim to the denunciation of some jealous or officious Communist, and have been arrested or perhaps summarily sent out of Paris.

"We will first go to my headquarters," he said to the boy, "and then to the Hôtel de Ville. There I will see the people who control the police, and they will, I think, have the names of any foreigners in lodgings."

"We must find them before night," said poor Frank.

The general's spurs jingled again, but he made no answer.

CHAPTER XVII.

DOMBROWSKI AT DINNER.

THE headquarters of General Dombrowski were on the upper and right-hand side of the Place Vendôme as one came from the hotel where Frank had been lodged. Over the huge and imposing coach entrance to the great mansion was one of those sculptured faces which had so attracted little Will's fancy when the boy first entered the historic Place.

The mansion had evidently been, in the old days, the abode of some great family. The beautifully carved stonework on the walls of the coachway leading to the grand staircase; the panels with armorial bearings; the wrought ironwork, worthy of Antwerp's best artists in her palmy days; the Cupids and the heads of goddesses which adorned the entrance to the stairway—all were evidences of the taste of the Great Monarch's time.

Frank had a quick eye for these beauties, but for the moment he saw them through a kind of mist of regrets and tears: and it was with a feeling of loneliness and despair that he climbed the long, handsome stairs behind the general, and followed him into an apartment where a dozen youngish officers, dressed in the sombre uniform of the Communists, were seated smoking and drinking champagne.

"There, my young friend," said the general, "are the officers of my staff. I must tell you that you can speak English with most of them, for they are not Frenchmen. As you might expect, half of them are Poles like myself, and there is a sprinkling of Italians, Greeks, and—yes, I believe we even have one or two Frenchmen. This, you must know," he said, taking off his sword and tossing it upon the table, "is a very cosmopolitan insurrection. If the Military Commission at the Commune does not decide to imprison or shoot me within the next few days, I may become the general-in-chief. How is that?"

He drew himself up to his full height, and

looked at Frank with a whimsical expression on his features, as if amused at his approaching promotion.

"Not so bad, eh?" he said, "for a Polish adventurer, as I suppose they would call me over yonder at Versailles. But come, let me present you to these gentlemen. You must have some dinner with us."

Frank felt inclined to shrink into a corner and keep communion with his own sad thoughts; but a moment's reflection convinced him that he must be agreeable to his new acquaintances, who might find him a way out of his trouble. So he bashfully joined the little group, while the general, standing with both hands on the boy's shoulders, told the staff briefly what had happened, and that Frank was their guest until he found his friends.

"A fine boy," said one of the officers, filling a glass with foaming champagne, and presenting it with a pleasant bow, which indicated a desire for the best of good-fellowship.

"No, no!" said Dombrowski, "don't make the boy drink; he is faint with hunger, I have

no doubt. Call the servants, and see that we have dinner promptly at six. And, till then, Master Frank and myself will drink nothing but water."

At this the officers set up a shout in concert, and with a loud voice informed the general that they had been exploring the cellar of the mansion, and had found there a thousand bottles of a glorious vintage, which it was a pity to leave for the millionnaires to drink on their return.

"On their return?" said the general. "Do you mean to imply that the insurrection will not be a success?"

They all insisted that nothing was further from their thoughts.

"Very well, then," said Dombrowski. "If the Commune is to succeed, the millionnaires are to be tabooed; therefore the wine can await our pleasure. It strikes me that you have had enough for the present; so banish these bottles, and let me tell you what I intend to do to-morrow. Master Frank, you will find a sofa in my bedroom, to which the servant will show you; I recom-

mend you to occupy it for the next hour or so."

A fat servant in a Communist uniform showed the boy into a handsomely furnished bedroom, where half a dozen fresh uniforms were hanging on the pegs so lately vacated by the fugitive millionnaire's wardrobe. Two or three gala swords were lying on the bed; a well-worn copy of Cæsar's "Commentaries," open evidently at some passage which the general had been reading, reposed on the toilet table; and an official journal of the Commune, with passages marked in red, lay beside a note-book in which Dombrowski had been writing before he went out. Two or three maps of the fortifications of the city and of the outlying forts were pinned to the wall, and the positions of the two armies were indicated upon them by red and black pins.

Even Frank's boyish experience was sufficient to show him that this luxurious house, with its beautiful rooms, its costly furniture, with these youthful foreign officers drinking and smoking, and with their general about to

sit down quietly to dinner, was not much like the idea of a camp in a city in revolt against a whole nation.

Frank threw himself upon the richly tapestried sofa and looked up at the painted ceiling, full of winged cherubim, and wondered if all war was like the little he was now seeing of it.

Under the very windows of this house, where all was luxury, but a few days before had occurred a terrible massacre. The Commune had come like a wave of fire; and who could say that some day a wave of blood might not sweep through the great square with its stately mansions and noble sculptures and its picturesque and monumental doorways? Was the general in earnest, or was he incompetent? How could he be so tranquil and enjoy such apparent ease when outside the fighting went on night and day, and at any moment the tide might turn against the insurrection?

Musing thus, with the pang of his separation from his brother and his grandfather still sharp in his mind, Frank fell asleep.

He was aroused by a gentle tap on his arm,

and he found the general, neatly attired in a fresh uniform, standing over him and saying:

"Come, my boy, to dinner, and try and do justice to our Communist fare. I have good news for you."

Frank sprang up with a smile on his face, but it faded away as the general said:

"I have learned that at the Hôtel de Ville we may find the record of all strangers who come and go each day in Paris, and as I have an errand there after dinner, we will find out this very night what has become of your friends. So cheer up, and to-morrow you will be laughing over your griefs of to-day! You shake your head? You think I am trying to comfort you? No; I believe we shall know all to-night."

Frank had never seen anything quite like the dinner at which he was now a guest. The dining-room was large, and beautifully decorated. The magnificently carved chimney-piece, representing the seizing of Proserpine, was so resplendent with colored marbles that it fairly dazzled the boy's eyes. The long

table was laden with beautiful silver candelabra, between which at regular intervals were baskets of flowers and the strange edifices of sugar at making which French cooks are so adroit.

Plates were laid for thirty persons. Handsome servants, dressed in the Communist uniform, were hurrying to and fro, bringing different side dishes, and a majestic personage with a silver chain around his neck was directing their movements from a door at the end of the hall. Here and there stood baskets containing cobwebbed bottles of Bordeaux and Burgundy, and in silver vases reposed flasks of frozen champagne which were to be served with the dessert.

"Why, here," thought Frank, "is luxury enough for half a dozen millionnaires. It doesn't look much like the simplicity that the Commune talks about in its official circulars. I wonder what Jules has for dinner at his outpost, and what he would think of this lay-out?"

Frank saw the general's grave gaze fixed upon him, as if he were reading his very

thoughts. The boy blushed, and it was not without a certain feeling of pride that he found himself seated next to Dombrowski, as if he were the principal guest. The other officers took seats carelessly, without the slightest ceremony. Then a side door was thrown open, and a dozen youngish men, negligently dressed,—one of them smoking a cigarette,—were ushered in, and were no sooner seated than they began to talk among themselves, without paying the smallest attention to the rest of the company. Four or five of the chairs remained vacant.

"Now, Frank," said the general, "what do you think the owner of the house would say, if he were to happen in?"

"I think," said Frank timidly, "that he would be somewhat surprised."

"You are right," said Dombrowski; "and he will be still more so when he discovers that the Commune has taken nothing from him but the wine that was in his bottles and the few luxuries he left in his larder. Not a painting, not a statue, not one of these little Cupids, not a piece of the silver plate, shall be lost. I

have sworn it," he said, looking sharply around at the staff, and bringing his hand down with a force which made the glasses dance. "There shall be no accusation of thieving against us."

Frank wondered how the general managed to make the distinction between the wines in the cellar and the pictures on the wall, but he felt that this was no concern of his.

An appetizing soup was placed before him, and presently the hum of dinner conversation began to grow steadily into a little whirlwind of loud and merry talk, interspersed here and there by soldierly oaths and phrases. The general talked now in French, now in his own language, and now in English; but neither from what he was saying, nor from his demeanor, could Frank discover that he was paying attention to military matters. He seemed even to evade reference to them, and one of the long discussions in which he engaged was about the merits of a recent play, as to which he differed with an artillery officer.

The scene was really splendid. The dining-

room was dazzling in the glow of the hundred wax lights, and the silver, the damask, the ivory, and the glass all sent forth a pleasant sheen. The servants hastening to and fro, the popping of corks, and the drinking of toasts, the occasional song from a merry member of the company, were rather confusing to Frank, whose head seemed trying to turn round, although he had refused to touch the various wines offered him.

Suddenly he heard a strain of beautiful music, and on looking up he saw that the four or five places which had been left vacant were now occupied by a little company of singers and players upon mandolins, men and women dressed in fantastic costumes, who had evidently been sent for to beguile with song these revellers as they sat at dessert.

Frank could hardly believe his eyes. So much luxury, so much prodigal expenditure, such complete indifference to the terrible war raging within a few thousand yards of them, such apparent forgetfulness of what must be their duty, by all these officers, shocked him, and he felt like crying out against it. Yet

Dombrowski, who was brave and austere enough when occasion demanded, seemed to think it all right. He praised the songs of the new-comers, and appealed to Frank to say that they were very fine.

The revelry continued so long that Frank had quite given up the hope of the visit to the Hôtel de Ville, thinking that the general had forgotten it. But after they had been at the table three hours, during which the staff had certainly consumed forty bottles of wine, Dombrowski rose, apparently as cool as when he had rescued Frank in the morning, and said:

"Now for the visit. We will steal away quietly, and leave these fellows to finish their dessert and their discussion together."

CHAPTER XVIII.

AGAIN THE HUNCHBACK.

THE April moonlight was splendid, and in spite of his woes, Frank could not repress a cry of admiration at the beautiful spectacle on the Rue de Rivoli, as he tramped along beside the general under the sculptured arcades of the old houses. The great court-yard of the Tuileries was bathed in magnificent floods of light, which gave to each antique statue on its moss-grown pedestal, to the groups of flowering shrubs, and to the masses of young leaves on the rows of trees next the Seine, a glorious yet almost spectral indistinctness.

As they passed the street which led by the front of the palace so soon to become the prey of the flames, Dombrowski pointed to it with a contemptuous gesture, saying:

"My staff was anxious that I should take up my headquarters here, where the emperor

so lately lived in state. What do you think of that for a proposition? Not very modest, eh, these budding Republicans and Socialists!"

Frank hardly knew what to answer. He began dimly to see in the general the combination of two men; one the hard-working, energetic soldier, democratic and anxious for the welfare of the masses; the other, the adventurer and reckless soldier of fortune, not strong enough to resist the luxuries by which he suddenly found himself surrounded. He could not express exactly what he thought, and while he was shaping it in his mind, the general continued:

"Yes; and if I had been fool enough to place my headquarters in this palace, out of which sovereigns have been driven so often, I should probably by this time have had the fish-wives after me as they were after you this morning." He laughed loudly, and as the echoes of his laughter died away among the arcades, he turned suddenly, facing toward Versailles, and listened intently.

Frank pricked up his ears also, and could

hear the sound of an irregular crackling of musketry, punctured, as it were, now and then by the deep barking of a cannon.

"Another battle!" said Frank.

"Another idiot!" said the general. "The man in command over there is determined to throw away what ammunition he has left, in spite of my strict orders to the contrary. Do you know, Frank," he continued, turning impetuously to the boy, "I have half a mind to go home and put on citizen's clothes, and to walk out of one of the gates, turning my back forever on this wretched city?"

Frank made no answer. He was puzzled by the general's demeanor, which clearly indicated a contempt for the people over a portion of whom he was in command.

"They want me to be general-in-chief of *that!*" said Dombrowski, snapping his fingers in token of contempt. "They shall hear some plain things at the Hôtel De Ville to-night, if they take my head to pay for it. Come, boy!" and he strode away so fast that Frank found it hard to keep up with him.

Although it was not late, there were but

few people on the great avenue, usually thronged until midnight or one in the morning with lively, gossiping promenaders.

Here and there a belated soldier, hurrying to rejoin his battalion, crept into the shadow as he caught a gleam of the general's insignia, fearing some reproach for his tardiness. A few market-carts, with their canvas hoods drawn smartly over their great mounds of vegetables, and with the men and women asleep in the cosey seats at the front, while the horses from habit went slowly along without guiding, were almost the only evidence of life which they saw. The huge old mansions were closed and silent. It was like a city in time of invasion by an enemy, or during a pestilence.

But as they approached the Hôtel de Ville there were signs that the Commune, at least, was not asleep. Lights gleamed from the windows of the quaint, ancient edifice. On the Place de Grève, where in olden times so many strange and horrible executions of traitors, bandits, and murderers had taken place, two or three companies of artillery were drawn up, and a hoarse member of the Military Com-

mission, with a crimson scarf knotted about his waist, was haranguing the poor, sleepy artillerymen.

"Hum!" said Dombrowski. "They are sending more fools to the front to be slaughtered."

"But, general," cried Frank, forgetting all caution in his surprise at the general's contemptuous remarks, "don't you believe in this insurrection? Don't you hope and think that it will succeed?"

The general's eyes twinkled. He turned and looked Frank clearly in the face. "I will be frank with you, my boy," he said. "I hope the insurrection will succeed, but I know that it will not."

"Why, then," cried the boy, "it is your duty to say so; is it not?"

A moment after, alarmed at his own audacity, and fearing lest he might have wounded this friend who had saved his life and was now trying to find his friends, he murmured:

"I am sorry I said that, but I could not help it; it seemed to say itself, general."

Dombrowski was silent for half a minute, then he said thoughtfully: "Perhaps you don't understand, my boy. Soldiers often fight in causes which they know will fail. That doesn't, and certainly should not, hinder them from doing their duty. My knowledge and experience tell me that this mighty insurrection is likely to break in two from its own weight, and from the evil elements that are creeping into it day by day. But I will do my duty to the end; although I am now and then tempted, as I just told you, to walk off and leave the idiots to stew in their own juice."

They stood for some time looking at the edifice where the Commune was doing its sinister work, and Frank brought a smile to the general's usually grave face by telling him more about the famous review at which he had been present with Grandpa Drubal.

But, at the mention of the beloved name Frank's voice began to tremble, and the general felt the need of hastening to discover, if possible, what had become of the old man and the little child.

Hurrying up the outer flight of steps, they paused in the first of the three great courtyards which the Hôtel de Ville contained. The general sent his name to the person whom he wished to see, and reproved the insolence of a half-drunken sentry who was very anxious to see Frank's "papers,"—meaning his passport,—after which they had a few moments to look around them. So they strolled about, and Dombrowski pointed to the niches which contained statues of celebrated Parisians of all ages. Frank's quick eye caught the view of Lafayette in his niche. Dombrowski pointed out old Bailly, who was the mayor of Paris at the outbreak of the great Revolution in the last century.

The number of these statues, the splendor of the courtyards, the beauty of the huge equestrian statue of Henri IV. in bronze, the statue of Louis XIV. in Roman garb, with a rather ridiculous wig of the eighteenth century, all awoke Frank's admiration.

While the general was giving Frank a little lecture on the horrors which the French peasantry suffered when Louis XIV. absorbed

everything for his own glory, they heard the sound of shuffling footsteps, and, turning, found a singular figure near them.

Frank started so violently that he thought the general must have perceived his surprise, for the person approaching them was the little hunchback whom he had found so often upon his path of late, and for whom he had such a singular repulsion. But the small man did not appear to notice Frank at all. His shrewd face—lit up by a pair of twinkling, malicious eyes, which seemed to penetrate one's very thoughts—wore an amused smile, and all its attention was concentrated upon Dombrowski.

At first Frank thought it would be best to tell the general everything that he knew about the little hunchback. Then he feared that it might in some way endanger his own all too precarious condition, and so he resolved to await the possibility of a recognition.

The small man was plainly dressed in rusty black. He carried under one arm a portfolio, and a bunch of keys jingled in his disengaged hand. Frank thought he might be the janitor of the Hôtel de Ville, but the general saluted

him at once as an employé of the famous Commission of General Safety.

"Well, my good friends," said the little man, in a rasping tone, which made the word friend sound almost as harsh as enemy, "you want to know something from me; what is it? Be quick about it, for the Commune's time is valuable."

Frank was surprised to hear the great general addressed so curtly, but he said nothing. The general seemed inclined for the moment to be humble.

"Very sorry to disturb you, my worthy friend," he said, "but two Americans have disappeared—an old man and a little child. Since noon to-day they are not to be found. My young friend here is the little boy's brother, and he is naturally much distressed. Knowing that you have the police of the city in your control, and feeling a friendly interest in this young man, I have called to see what you can do to help us, and if you have any record of these good people. My name is Dombrowski, general of the Commune."

"Yes, yes!" said the little man. "General,

to be sure. But we see so many generals, you know, here," and he laughed harshly. "Generals come and go; one replaces another; so you must pardon me if I did not know you at once."

"Yes," said Dombrowski, whose temper was beginning to feel the strain. "You are great general-makers here. We soldiers know that, and we know what the result sometimes is."

"Ha! ha!" said the little hunchback. "I suppose you do, you soldiers. That's what we make the changes for. We want you to feel the results."

Dombrowski looked down at the deformed mite, as if speculating how long it would take to strangle him; but he bit his lips, and after a moment returned to the subject of his visit.

"Can you help us about these lost people, citizens of a country always friendly to us, citizen?"

This word citizen, so pleasant to the Communist's ear, seemed to make the little hunchback somewhat more confiding.

"We shall see, citizen general, we shall

see," he said, jingling his keys. "When did the Americans arrive in Paris?" And now the hunchback looked Frank calmly in the face as if he had not the slightest remembrance of ever having seen him before.

The general asked Frank this question, for Frank could make out but little of the hunchback's French; and as soon as the date was given, the little man called a soldier and sent him to the office of the Commission to look over the records.

"While he is searching," he said, "we might look about a little, citizen general. You have never seen all the glories of this famous mansion, I suppose?"

"Not all," said the general. "Let us look, by all means."

The little hunchback jingled his keys, and presently led them up a fine flight of stairs into the reception and ballrooms on the first floor. As he opened the doors, both Frank and the general uttered cries of admiration, for the whole splendid suite was lighted up as if for a great ball or municipal function; and the rooms in which Paris had rivalled the

splendor of the Imperial palaces, with the superb mural decorations of Ingres, Delacroix, Lehmann, and Muller, showed all their beauties under the soft yet penetrating glow.

"You seem prodigal of gas this evening," said the general, dryly.

"Citizen general," said the hunchback, with a frown, "the members of the Military Commission contemplate giving a grand fête here in a few days, when you and your comrades have won some more victories, and they are trying the effect of the lighting this evening."

"Very good of them, I am sure," said the general, "but I can't exactly see how that helps along our cause."

Frank could not help thinking of the splendid dinner at which Dombrowski had just presided, and wondering whether or not that would help along the cause. "All these fellows," he thought, "have so much luxury and splendor suddenly left at their disposal that they don't know how to use it."

The little hunchback was inclined to be talkative. "Yes," he said; "two Americans disappeared? No doubt they have com-

mitted some imprudence. Who knows?" and he laughed a kind of snarling laugh, and now he looked at Frank in such a peculiar way that the boy's blood seemed to run cold for a moment.

"Imprudent or not, citizen, they must be found, and shall be, or my name is not Dombrowski," said the general.

"Certainly, certainly, citizen general," said the hunchback, suddenly growing humbler in manner, "but so many things happen, you know, in these abnormal times; so many strange things happen! *Parbleu!* A man goes out to walk; he never comes back! What are you to say? Who will you blame? There are so many strange things."

Frank, who seemed to understand by instinct, felt like flying at the little hunchback's throat. His hands trembled; yet he said nothing. But the small man did not seem to observe this.

"Yes, yes, citizens," continued the little man; "the Commission will give a great fête. There will be five, six, seven thousand people present, all citizens and citizenesses; none of

your bourgeois, grocers, bakers, and butchers, but good honest working people with hard hands."

"Like ours, for instance," said the general lightly.

Now the little hunchback's hands were soft and white, as if he had never done anything but hold a pen or a painter's brush, but he did not seem offended. He laughed his harsh laugh, and continued:

"The people will rejoice where the tyrants of the people used to enjoy themselves. It will be very grand. In the kitchen below there is every facility for supplying a thousand people at once with a good dinner. We shall begin the festival with a monster banquet for a thousand people. Will not that be glorious?"

"Very fine," said Dombrowski, "but don't let my soldiers, who could not get enough to eat last week, hear about it, or there may be some slight criticism."

"Dear me!" said the hunchback, "that would be very sad. But perhaps some of those same soldiers may be invited to the festival,

citizen general. We shall know how to choose. We shall choose so that there may not be sharp criticism. Here," he added, "the prefect entertained the Emperor and the Empress when the little Prince was baptized. There were five hundred servants on that occasion, citizen general; but *we* will have a thousand servants! a thousand, I tell you"—and he jingled his keys again.

"I am sorry I shall not be here to see such splendor," said Dombrowski, "but I shall be away fighting the enemy—unless your Military Commission removes me."

"Yes. Ha! ha! Very good, citizen general," said the hunchback. "Ha! ha! Famous! Unless they remove you." He looked again at the pair with that peculiar gaze which seemed a compound of deadly malice and whimsical fun, as some strange animal, unconscious of its own ferociousness, might regard its prey.

They moved toward the door by which they had entered.

"And let me tell you," said the hunchback, placing his white hand on the general's arm,

and pointing mysteriously toward the floor, "we have other things here worth noting, citizen general. We have barrels of gunpowder here. We have heaps of old rags and wood soaked in petroleum, in all the corners of the cellars, hidden away in the corridors. We have all the materials, ha, ha! all the arrangements for destruction. We have made up our minds," and his voice lowered to a whisper, "that nobody shall ever have all this splendor after us. Either it remains ours, citizen general, or it goes up in smoke and flame!"

The general looked down at the hunchback with a kind of pitying smile. He made no answer. "Come, Frank," he said in English, "the smell of all this gas turns my head."

As they went down the stairs, they found the soldier who had been sent to look at the records waiting for his little master. There was a peculiar smile on his broad and wine-illumined features.

CHAPTER XIX.

PLOT AND COUNTERPLOT.

THE soldier and the hunchback held a whispered conference. Once or twice the hunchback spread out his lean arms and moved them up and down sideways, like the sails of a windmill, so excited and angry was he at what the soldier was telling him. Finally, he dismissed the man with an imperious gesture, and turning to Dombrowski and Frank, he said, with a wicked smile lighting up his features with a kind of unearthly glare:

"It is as I expected, citizen general. We have no record of the whereabouts of this young man's friends. But that should not discourage you from the search." He smiled again. "So many things happen, you know, in time of war."

"What does he say?" cried Frank, furiously. "Whatever it is, I don't believe it."

Luckily for Frank, the little hunchback did not understand what Frank said, but he gathered enough from the boy's manner to make him bestow upon him another of his blood-curdling smiles. Then he said:

"The youth is naturally worried. But how long have these good people been lost? Only a few hours? There is nothing alarming about that. Some people search for weeks before they discover their lost ones."

Dombrowski had placed himself between Frank and the hunchback, and he held the boy by the arm with a strong grip, for he feared that some imprudent expression might injure them both. In polite tones he said to the little hunchback:

"Very well, citizen. If the Commission of Public Safety cannot guarantee the security of strangers in the capital, even in time of insurrection, it ought to be reformed. But as I have no authority to reform it, I will bid you good-evening."

The hunchback grew quite pale. His eyes sparkled, and he looked at Dombrowski with a singularly malicious expression.

"The Commission of Public Safety," he said, "is quite able to respond for the security of strangers of all kinds, even those who wear uniforms, when it becomes necessary. Yes; as to security, I think our Commission can respond for that."

Dombrowski understood. He knew that many men of inferior position daily denounced their superiors, and managed to get them sent to prison, and he did not despise this threat from the vindictive and deformed creature whose dignity he had offended.

"Come, come, citizen," he said, "let us have no heat about this matter. I am simply making an enquiry, as an act of mercy, for this poor boy, who is quite distracted at being left alone in such a place and at such a time. How would you feel in a foreign city, between two contending armies, without money and without friends?"

"Oh, I should manage to get out of the scrape," croaked the hunchback, "and so will this fellow." He stepped around and patted Frank approvingly on the back. "Let him put on the uniform of the Commune, ..."

shoulder a musket, and he may be a hero of the new war for humanity."

"Very well, citizen," said Dombrowski; "the boy shall want for nothing so long as I can take care of him. In the meantime, no offence, I suppose, if I make further enquiries of your Commission; through you, of course," he added.

"When we have anything to communicate concerning the two people," said the hunchback, showing his teeth like a hyena, "we will send word to your headquarters at once—if you are still general," he added, with a politeness which was almost as galling as an open insult would have been.

Dombrowski turned upon him quickly. "Enough of that, my good friend," he said. "I may be general-in-chief in a few days, and should such dignity be vested in my poor person, you shall hear of me again. Good-night."

"Ha! ha!" said the hunchback, as they stepped down into the corridor. "Yes, citizen general, we may hear of you again."

Frank and his protector went out into the

night with a strange feeling of unrest and of injustice in their hearts. Some curious instinct told the boy that they had been denied information which might have brought his loved ones back to him; and Dombrowski, although he would not have admitted it to Frank, felt the same conviction.

Gradually he made up his mind that Grandpa Drubal had incurred the displeasure of the Commune for some reason best known to that dread power itself, and had either been expelled from the city or arrested, naturally taking little Will with him. He determined that the mystery should be cleared up within the next forty-eight hours, even if it cost him his position. "I will inform the consul of my suspicion," he said to himself, "and he may set his machinery to work."

Then the bitter thought came to him: "Why should the consul listen to me? I am almost an outlaw, proscribed by the nation to which the consul is accredited, and in his eyes an adventurer liable to be shot against a stone wall within the next six weeks. I could

probably neither convince nor frighten him into making an energetic search. What is to be done?"

They were moving slowly across the great Place de Grève when they heard hurried footsteps behind them. Dombrowski turned, and saw a slouching orderly hastening up. The man saluted, and said in a low voice:

"If you are the Citizen General Dombrowski, your presence is at once requested before the Military Commission."

Dombrowski, although accustomed to all kinds of surprises, was a little startled by this announcement, which confirmed a dread that had been growing on him for weeks—the dread that either jealousy or suspicion was to cause his arrest or dismissal. The Commission of Public Safety and the Military Commission had mysterious and intimate relations, and anything done to offend the one was liable to be resented by the other. Had he fallen into a trap?

"Lead on," he said to the soldier. "I am always happy to obey any order of the

citizen commissioners. Follow me, Frank," he said, "I have to go before my superiors; we may see some fun."

They re-entered the Hôtel de Ville, and at the end of a long corridor came upon a court-yard, out of which opened several offices filled with uniformed officials, most of whom were dozing with their feet upon tables and their caps drawn over their eyes. In one corner of a brilliantly lighted little room five or six men were seated about a card table playing piquet, and drinking red wine out of glass pitchers. Just beyond this room was a dark and dusky passage, at the further end of which the trio came upon a door marked, "Military Commission."

"Enter, citizen general," said the soldier.

"After you, citizen," said the general.

And with these little exercises in Parisian politeness they passed in. Frank sank down in a chair near the door in a dark corner. The room was dimly lighted, and when they entered it was occupied by only one man, who sat at a table covered with a green cloth, intently regarding a map. As they came in,

he leaped up, and stood with one long finger still placed upon the map.

The face he turned toward the visitors was that of a man still young, but it was already old with passion and self-indulgence. There was little of capacity in it, much of cunning and ruse. It was a face to be afraid of.

"Have you brought the general with you?" said he, addressing the soldier.

"I am here," said Dombrowski. "Much at your service, citizen commissioner."

The commissioner's face took on a savage scowl.

"General," he said, "the Commission is not pleased with your recent work. It is glad to have an opportunity to tell you so. Hearing that you were engaged with some of my colleagues, I thought it well to call you before us, and to say that you must be more active. I don't say that you are not a good tactician, nor insinuate that your delays are not sometimes necessary, but we must have more action. You must go to the front at once and remain there, and have some kind of a fight every day. Every day, citizen general, do

you understand?" he repeated. "Have you anything to say in reply?"

"Nothing," said Dombrowski dryly, "except that, if there is no one to fight with, we must fight among ourselves. Do I understand you to advise that?"

"You are to understand me, citizen general, as not countenancing any jokes," said the citizen commissioner; "and the sooner you are convinced of that, the better. Do you mean to tell me that the Versaillists hide themselves and will not fight?"

"I mean to say," replied Dombrowski, in a very decided tone, "that the enemy asks only to crush us. It will not fight in skirmishes to waste its men, but would rather tempt us to open engagement, in which we should probably, in our present condition, be beaten. I speak, of course, about my own line of defence. I know little of what the other generals are doing. I know what I would do if I had supreme command."

"And what would that be, citizen general?" said the commissioner.

"I would expel all the drones and the in-

capables from the army, and I would make a vigorous attempt to dislodge the enemy from its positions in front of two or three of our forts. For, when they get possession of these forts the Commune will be dead."

The commissioner's manner became more agreeable. A smile replaced the scowl.

"It is strange, citizen general," he said, "that your words express my own convictions. *Tenez!* I was just studying the map and saying to myself what you have said. It is strange!"

"Not so strange, citizen commissioner," said Dombrowski, with a delicate shade of flattery in his tone; "for it is easy to see that you have the military sentiment."

The commissioner left the table and came forward. "Listen to me, citizen general," he said: "there are daily complaints and denunciations of you. I am convinced that they are groundless. See, I have received one just now. It is but a few minutes old; yet I shall burn it. My colleagues shall know nothing of it, and I will even tell you that it comes from——"

Dombrowski interrupted him, smiling: "From the Commission of Public Safety, I will be sworn." The general felt convinced that the little hunchback had played him this trick.

"Precisely: from the Commission of Public Safety. It is one of those vague, mysterious accusations, of which we receive thousands about everybody. What a jealous, mischievous lot our Commune must be! But, see! I burn the paper." He held it over the lamp, and it was reduced to ashes. "Don't mind what I said about your delays. I think you can count on our support of you for general-in-chief; not just now, but soon. Good-night, citizen general. I intended to have a long talk with you, but—you have opened my eyes. When you get your promotion, I shall want to see you again. Take my advice, and go to the front at once—to-night, if possible."

The citizen commissioner did not even deign to notice Frank, who followed Dombrowski out, and as soon as they were once more in the Place the boy could not help asking:

"Is anything wrong, general? I hope I

have not been the means of getting you into trouble?"

Dombrowski laughed merrily. "Nothing wrong! No, my boy; nothing but your trouble now to preoccupy us. Yet see what a labyrinth this Commune is! Would you believe that the citizen commissioner sent for me to reprimand me, punish me, perhaps throw me into prison; and that he had in his hand a denunciation sent to him by that infamous little hunchback even while our footsteps were still ringing in his ears; but that, instead of punishing me, he promised me new dignities and honors? Strange people! Strange Commune! Strange insurrection! Come, let us hurry back to the Place Vendôme, take the citizen commissioner's advice, and be off to the front. But—I was forgetting your trouble."

He turned and laid his hand upon Frank's shoulder.

"Listen, my boy," he said, "you are old enough to accept misfortune without weeping and wailing. We are going to try once more to find your grandfather and your little

brother from the proper authorities, your consul, your minister, or ambassador, or whatever you call him, if needs be. If that fails, we can do no more. The Commission of Public Safety will tell us if it has anything to communicate. In the meantime, nothing that you can do will help. Will you go with me and be my guest until better times, trusting to me to do all that I can in your cause?"

Frank looked up at him with shining eyes. "I have no right to ask anything of you," he said. "You have been very kind to me. Surely the consul will see me safely through this affair, and I have a little money left, although," he added faintly, "it isn't much. But if Grandpa Drubal isn't found, we must telegraph to his banker in America. There's nobody else who could be of any use to us over there."

"Yes," said Dombrowski; "but in view of what is likely to happen within the next few days, I entreat you to take my advice and remain with me. You will be safer than with the consul, for the consul cannot respond for

his own safety. Who knows what may happen?"

They were still discussing this view of the matter when they got back to the door of the mansion in the Place Vendôme. The doors leading into the courtyard were wide open, and the court was filled with a noisy and menacing mob of men and women. Gaunt figures with red Liberty caps on, with naked swords in their hands, were running up and down the marble stairs. From the apartments on the first floor came shrieks of angry women; and confusion reigned throughout the place.

"What is this?" cried Dombrowski, laying his hand on his sword and springing forward. "Stick closely to me, Frank. We must get up these stairs without being hindered by any of these people."

He strode into the courtyard, jingling his spurs, and looking neither to the right nor to the left. Frank put on a bold face and marched beside him.

CHAPTER XX.

DOMBROWSKI ADOPTS FRANK.

THE general's caution to Frank was not a vain one. Just as they were entering the antechamber on the first floor a throng of drunken men and women came rushing out of the room beyond, and Frank would have been thrown down and trampled upon if he had not clung resolutely to the general's arm.

The general caught Frank by the shoulder, and wheeled him around. They went with the crowd a few steps; then the general pulled the boy sharply to one side and opened a little door. "In with you, quick!" he said. "If those creatures recognize me, they might do us both a mischief."

They stood in a small closet used as a wardrobe and for the storage of wood for the fires in winter. The door, old-fashioned and thick, swung inward. The general shut it and leaned against it, and they remained in this

airless hole, panting and listening with all their might for the sound of the last retreating footsteps. At last they came out of their concealment, and hurried forward into the dining-room where Frank and the general had so lately sat side by side.

Frank uttered a cry of amazement. Everything in the magnificent room was in wreck and ruin. The beautiful silver candelabra were twisted and broken. The plate and the crystal were lying in confusion upon the polished floor. Wine-stains disfigured the superb damask cloths. The tapestries were slit as if by sword-thrusts; and the mantelpiece, so rich with its incrustations and carvings, was broken and defaced.

Dombrowski gave a long and loud whistle. Then he turned to Frank with a curious smile on his lips.

"We need not go far," he said, "to search for the authors of this mischief."

Frank's astonished look showed that he could not conceive how or why anyone could have done such barbarous deeds.

"Don't you see, my little friend," said the

general, "that this is the vengeance of our neighbors of the Communist club out of whose hands I fished you a few hours ago? I'll wager my sword that that big fish wife has been carousing here while we have been cooling our heels at the Hôtel de Ville."

"But what good would that do them?" said Frank, more and more astonished.

The general laughed loudly. "When you have seen a little more of the insurrection," he said, "you will understand that people do mischief from malice, not from desire to improve their condition. Now, let us see if my suspicions are not correct."

In a corner of the great hall they found a frightened servant, half fainting, on a chair. When Dombrowski approached him he put up his hands feebly, as if expecting to be murdered, and imploring mercy. He had been severely beaten, and it was only after much difficulty and coaxing that the general got from him the story.

"We were just clearing the table," said the servant, "perhaps half an hour after you and this young gentleman had left, and some of

the officers were settling down in a corner for a game of cards, when there came the most diabolical racket on the stairs, and before we could say ten words the room was filled with five or six hundred 'delegates' from the great club which meets in the church over yonder. A pretty set they were—women in their blue aprons, with their arms bare and their cheeks flushed with wine; some of them carrying knives—and one old creature had a bayonet! With them they had a hundred of the worst-looking cut-throats man ever saw. They began by accusing you, general—saving your respect—of too much luxury when you ought to be fighting the enemy, and then they smashed right and left!"

"What did I tell you, Master Frank?" said the general.

Frank felt abashed, and began to murmur excuses for having been the innocent cause of so much trouble.

"Not a bit!" said the general. "Could I do otherwise than take you out of the clutches of those fiends? They have had their revenge, and they have dared me," he said,

looking thoughtfully at the widespread ruin. He did not speak again for some moments. Then he added in a low, deep voice: "Yes, they have had their revenge, but they have taught us a good lesson. We will try to profit by it. But first let us make sure that there are none lingering about here."

The vindictive delegates from the club had gone as quickly as they had come. "All they wanted, general, was to give you a warning, so they said," continued the servant. "The members of the staff are very much disturbed. I won't say they were frightened, but, certainly, if they had made any protest, they would all have been killed."

"Hum!" said the general. "Where are these worthy warriors of mine?"

"They are all in the little room next to your bedroom, general, and I think they are holding some kind of a consultation."

"Come, Frank," said the general, "let us have this matter settled," and he strode along the dining-room through the wreck of the luxurious ornaments of the dining-table, and

led Frank by a side door and a private staircase up to his bedroom.

A hum of voices in the next room announced that the servant's conjecture was right. Dombrowski listened grimly for half a minute, then he knocked loudly on the wall. The door opened, and the frightened face of one of the young officers peeked in.

"Heaven be praised, general!" he said. "We thought you were certainly killed."

"And I suppose you were already electing my successor," said Dombrowski gruffly. "Come here, all of you, and listen! It is your nonsense and folly, of which I have long been too indulgent, that has brought this visitation upon us!" he shouted, as the officers came crowding in. "This matter must be patched up as best it may, and we must take the hint given us by these creatures of the club, or our uniforms, with our forms inside of them, may be decorating some of the neighboring lamp-posts within the next few days. Do you understand? Don't you see that we are in the hands of the mob, which cares about as much for our military authority

and our decorations as it cares for a sparrow which flies across its track. Wake up, gentlemen, and prepare for serious business! I have just come from the Military Commission. Bushels of denunciations are poured in there against us every day."

The officers looked at each other with consternation written on their faces. One of them tried to speak, but his voice stuck in his throat.

"I tell you," shouted Dombrowski, pounding on the little table in front of which he sat, "that we are all dead men unless we strike a decisive blow for the Commune within the next few days! Do you understand that? Is it plain enough for you? Now, no prattle! I see that my meaning has penetrated through the trappings of luxury. We are all ashamed of ourselves, but we will admit that to ourselves alone. Now, to horse! Bring yourselves into shape for action. Let me see you"—he drew out his watch—"it is half-past eleven o'clock—let me see you in the square on horseback, and ready to trot, at midnight exactly."

There was something of the leader in his demeanor at last, thought Frank. His eyes sparkled as he heard the general's ringing voice, and as he saw the electrical effect it had upon the officers. He did not know what he said, but here was a man who could command.

"If I were him," thought Frank, with a twinkle in his eye, "I would not leave Paris for the front before I had given those people at the club a little taste of what I could do when I had my back up."

As if the general had read the boy's thoughts, he turned to him at that moment, and as the officers were going from the room, he whispered :

"Now, Master Frank, I will show you that although I know how to receive a lesson, I also understand how to resent an insult."

A moment after, he added : "My boy, the moment to decide has come. We are leaving Paris to-night, and although we shall not be many miles from it, we may not return into the city for a month. Everything may be chaos and confusion here for weeks ; or," he

continued, "we may be back here in a few days. I will promise you faithfully to keep up the search for your lost friends. In the meantime, is it not better that you should come with me?"

Frank did not know, and he said so candidly. Alone in the great city, baffled and confused by the unsuccessful efforts of the day, he felt uncertain as to his future course.

"Come," said the general kindly. "I will take you to my headquarters in the field, and I can send you back at any time with a safe conduct if we hear anything, or if you desire to continue the search yourself. Stop a minute; can you ride?"

Frank looked at him in surprise. "What, horseback?" he said. "Of course. I could do that when I was five years old."

"Good!" said the general. "All that you need for your equipment is a Communist cap. Here is a belt to put around your waist, and you will have a uniform much more regular than some that you will see in the field. Now I will scratch you a bit of paper which will make you perfectly safe in our lines. But

you must take care not to get into the lines of the enemy."

"I will do my best," said Frank bravely. He tried on the cap, which fitted him very well; and as he took up the belt and adjusted it, it suddenly seemed to him as if he had grown much older.

He felt a sense of loneliness and of independence. He could not shake off his great grief, which weighed heavily upon him; but there was something exciting and fascinating in this life of an adventurer, full though it was of deadly danger, upon which he was just entering at midnight in the guardianship of a man whom he had known but a few hours—in a strange city, thousands of miles from home.

Dombrowski was writing orders in his despatch-book, and presently he rang the bell and sent off several despatches. "Now," he said to Frank, "get a few moments of rest. You will find a horse saddled and ready when we meet at the door at midnight. Ah, here is a friend you may find useful!" and he took from a drawer a handsome pistol, assured himself that it was loaded, and handed it to

Frank. "Put that in your pocket," he said. "You might meet with marauders or vagabonds when we are once outside the fortifications."

Frank obeyed.

"I think," said the general, jingling his spurs with vigor as he left the room, "that our friends in the club will have a little surprise, if they are still in session."

"Still in session, late at night?" said Frank. "Why, do they talk night and day?"

"Night sessions are the most exciting," said the general. "Sometimes two or three thousand persons gather in a church, light it up brilliantly, and stay there all night haranguing about that of which they know absolutely nothing. Now and then they have orgies there, dance, and drink wine."

"In the church?" said Frank, in a tone of horror.

"Certainly," said Dombrowski. "Have you not been told that all religion is suspended, that churches are closed to worshippers, that the priests are driven away, and that only the

sort of folks we saw this morning frequent them now? A fine state of affairs, isn't it?"

Frank was silent. He began to understand that the general had a deep contempt for the gross and vulgar errors of the insurrection for which he was fighting.

. . . . .

Frank started up suddenly from the little doze into which he had fallen. He heard the sound of a bugle, clear and musical, in the square. There was a heavy tramp of feet, in rhythmical motion, near by. Now came the clatter of horses' hoofs.

Frank stretched himself, jumped up, and opened the window. The cool night air rushed in. With it came a sound of the noise of sabres, of champing on their bits by horses. A moment later, the voice of Dombrowski was heard, calling loudly:

"Come, Master Frank! we are waiting!"

He adjusted his cap, which was still on his head when he had fallen asleep, assured himself that his pistol was in his pocket, and, leaving the light burning, hurried to join the general.

Dombrowski laid a light cape cloak over the boy's arm. "I had forgotten to give you this," he said. "Fasten it to your saddle, you will need it before we reach our stopping place; the early morning hours are cool. Now then, you have nothing to fear, and if I read you aright, you do not know how to be afraid."

In the square the officers of the staff, mounted and presenting a decent military appearance, respectfully awaited the general.

Frank saw that the horses were good, and that the one chosen for him was just such a one as he would have picked out for himself; a thin, wiry mare, capable of covering many miles at unbroken speed; a handsome creature, with quivering nostrils, beautiful dark eyes, and long full mane and tail.

"What a splendid mare!" said the boy.

"An old cavalry horse that has done good service in the regular army," said Dombrowski. "I'll wager I could find the government brand on her flanks now. It would not do for you to be captured on that mare," he said, with a laugh. "She would be your condemnation."

And now the bugle was heard again. Frank saw with surprise a battalion of infantry come marching out of the shadow and halt, awaiting orders. "Do you see those fellows?" said Dombrowski to Frank, as he swung into the saddle. "I am going to surround our friends at the club, and give them such a scare that they won't forget it as long as they live."

In spite of his many sorrows, Frank could not repress a laugh. It rang out on the night air with its boyish freshness and vigor, and provoked the general to laughter also.

"You won't be sorry to see your persecutors get a good scare; will you, Frank?"

"I don't think it will hurt my feelings very much," said the boy.

The general gave the word of command. He whispered to an officer of the staff, who fell into line beside Frank, and, addressing him in broken English, recommended him to keep near him as they trotted along.

The bugle sounded, the battalion took up the march, and the whole company was soon

threading its way through the narrow and winding streets in which Frank had been lost before his adventure at the club.

Fifteen minutes later they were in front of the church door. The infantry spread out into lines, surrounding the isolated sides of the edifice, and Dombrowski and his staff, hastily dismounting, thrust aside the leather curtain in the doorway, and strode in. Frank was first in the ranks, and would have been if he had seen a hundred pistols pointed at his head. He was ripe for adventure now, and he longed to see the discomfiture of the big fish wife who had thumped him so soundly in the morning.

The beautiful church was illuminated from nave to altar. The red-faced man was no longer in the carved pulpit. Probably he had talked himself hoarse, or been overcome with wine and carried away, the daily fate of many of the club orators; but to his surprise, and not a little to his delight, Frank saw leaning upon the pulpit rail the voluminous form of his enemy, Manon. He set up a shout, and pointed her out to the general, who had drawn

his sword and advanced to the nave with menacing air.

There was a shrill yell from the women, who were beginning to rush for the doors. But when they found themselves intercepted by half a dozen military men with cocked rifles and bayonets, they became almost hysterical.

"This is a trap, a trap!" they shrieked. "The general is going to carry us all off to prison. Down with him! It is treason!"

"Silence, you blasphemous wretches!" cried the general, brandishing his sword and seeming all at once to grow taller. "If I don't capture you and have you thrown into prison, where you belong, it is because I have better business on hand. You defile the house of the Lord with your infamous orgies and your blasphemy, and you disgrace the Commune with your nonsense and your crimes! I will not punish you all, but I will teach some of you a lesson. Come down from yonder pulpit!" he shouted to Manon, who stood as if thunderstruck, gazing at the officers, who had their revolvers in their hands,

and some of whom were approaching the foot of the pulpit. "Bring her down, I say!" thundered Dombrowski. "Take half a dozen of the ring-leaders and send them to the nearest post, and let them stay there till I can appear against them for invading my apartments and destroying the property of the Commune! And as for you others," he cried, turning to two or three hundred men and women who were circling about him like frightened pigeons, "go to your homes! This club will be closed to-night! I take the responsibility of the action! Out with you!"

As they filed between the soldiers on their way out, Dombrowski caused Manon and seven of the noisiest of her fellow fish wives to be arrested, then he seized upon half a dozen of the worst-looking men, and had them conducted under an escort to the nearest post, there to await his complaint. The church was closed, and a guard set at the door. "Let nothing be done here until I return," he said.

As the choleric Manon departed in the custody of two stout soldiers, she caught

sight of Frank, who smiled graciously upon her and gave her a military salute. She looked wickedly at him, but said nothing.

Half an hour later Frank and the general were trotting side by side, a little ahead of the staff, up a long, deserted street, at one end of which arose a shadowy mass of huge walls, looking gigantic in the vague light of the summer night.

"There are the fortifications," said Dombrowski. "In a few minutes we shall be in the open country."

CHAPTER XXI.

IN WHICH SNY REAPPEARS AND DISAPPEARS.

FRANK'S heart gave a bound as the little troop came under the shadow of the great walls of Paris, and he thought sorrowfully of how he was leaving behind him in the war-ridden capital all that was dear to him in the world.

For a moment it seemed to him that he must jump down from his horse, leave this rough but kind friend who was trying to help him, and run back into the city, and begin anew his desperate search for the loved and lost ones.

But Frank was a practical boy, fast growing into ripeness of judgment; and a moment's reflection convinced him that he must bear his pain in silence and accept the chances of war. Perhaps, after all, some unseen hand was guiding him along the right road.

Dombrowski's escort had halted in the

shadow of the walls, while the general went forward to the gate. Frank leaped down from his horse and walked backward a short distance, leading the animal by the bridle. When he was perhaps fifty yards from the soldiers, he suddenly came upon a sight which so surprised him that he could not even cry out. He stood with his mouth wide open and one hand outstretched, as if he were hailing the familiar figure which was crossing the road but a few feet from him.

It was Sny or his ghost! The pale, gaunt Sny, as he had first met him at the hotel door in the Rue de Castiglione! Sny, in the same dingy overcoat, with the same bulging pockets, which indicated that they contained all the adventurer's worldly baggage.

"Can it be possible," thought Frank, "that this is what they call an optical illusion; that because Sny comes into my mind I seem to see him passing in front of me? Why, no; that is the boy himself! And I'll bet anything that in those big pockets the birds are all stowed away ready for business. Here, hold on, Sny!" he cried, finding his voice at

last. "Don't you see me? Wait half a minute. No danger! I want to speak to you."

To Frank's astonishment the figure did not turn its head. Without hastening its pace, it crossed the road, stepped down the bank to where a low hedge protected the grounds of a country house, and then disappeared in the shadows. There was something at once so real and so phantom-like in this that it gave Frank a little shock of terror.

"Goodness, that may be a ghost!" he thought. "If it was Sny, why didn't he turn and answer me? He must have heard me. And if it wasn't Sny in flesh and blood, what on earth was it?"

Determined to make one more effort, he jumped on his horse and spurred the animal forward down the sloping bank to the hedge, and shouted once more:

"Sny! Sny! Is that you, alive or dead? Why don't you answer?"

No sound came from the stillness. The house was probably deserted. Not even a dog barked. Half frantic at the fruitlessness of

his endeavor, Frank rode slowly back, wondering that the apparition which had caused him such genuine alarm had not been noticed by the soldiers. But they did not think it necessary to follow with spying gaze anyone who was a *protégé* of Dombrowski. They were still huddled together just as the boy had left them, and were evidently thinking of anything but him. He sat dejectedly waiting for Dombrowski to return and give the signal for departure.

At last they rode out of the gate of the city. On they clattered, over broad bridges, across the deep moat, and when they had gone a few hundred yards into the naked military zone which lies between the fortifications and the suburbs, Dombrowski drew rein and called Frank to his side. The staff and the other cavaliers went rambling along in the shadows.

"I did not know until I came here, general," said Frank, "that modern cities had fortifications. It seems strange that such a city as Paris should be surrounded by walls and moats like those old towns which we read of in the stories of the Middle Ages."

"True," said Dombrowski; "open cities are the rule nowadays. But about thirty years ago the French made up their minds that a modern system of walls would be a good thing for Paris, and they were not mistaken. You see that they were able to hold out against the Prussians longer with their walls than they could have managed to do without them."

"Yes, I know," said Frank, his practical sense coming uppermost; "but what was the good of the long siege we have heard so much about? Wouldn't it have been better if the city had been open, and taken at once? Then the war would have been settled more quickly, and a lot of horrible suffering would have been prevented."

"Oh, no, no!" said Dombrowski, laughing. "That isn't the way our French friends reason. If the Prussians had been able to walk into Paris in a few days' promenade from the Rhine, they might have made up their minds to stay for good; or, if they did not do that, they might be coming much too frequently. It is only by making the seizure of

a great city very expensive to an enterprising enemy that wars are rendered less frequent. No, I think our French friends were right to girdle Paris with these great masses of stone."

"What a mint of money they must have cost!" said Frank. "Eighty millions of francs, we were told."

"Not only that," said the general, "but look at all this land, this great circumference of the military zone, running to waste. All this naked country that you see here is kept so year after year for a double reason: that the authorities may use it at any moment for military purposes, and that, when they do want to use it, they will not be held responsible for damages to property owners. The loss on this waste land is prodigious. Why, a quarter of a million people could live on the military zone! Yet now there are probably not ten thousand persons scattered over this dreary tract, and they are the dregs of society, men released from prison, or poor outlawed devils who till little market gardens, and live in hovels which can be vacated at a moment's notice; and they are only tolerated.

Keeping up a military front is very expensive, Master Frank."

"So I should think," said the boy, "and I can't believe it is worth a nation's while to carry such a heavy expense for twenty years at a time, just to be ready when a quarrel comes."

"Ah, in that view," said the general, turning his horse and starting to follow the column, "you would have all the military men of the country against you, especially just now."

As they rode on through the night, the general proved himself a charming companion. They came presently into a region of vineyards and gardens, beautiful in spite of long neglect during the Prussian siege, and in many of them the early flowers were in bloom, and the perfume of the lilacs and the acacia blossoms drifted heavily on the air. The horses seemed to enjoy this night promenade, pricked up their ears, and sniffed joyously. Over slope after slope the cavaliers wound their way toward the river bank, where they were to rest until daylight.

Dombrowski told Frank many entertaining stories of his adventures in Polish insurrections. He sang little snatches of German and English songs. He quoted from Shakspere and Fenimore Cooper. He talked learnedly of the socialist doctrines which had brought about the Commune, and he was so fascinating that Frank, for the moment, forgot his anguish of heart, and gave himself up to adventure.

It was three o'clock in the morning, and the hour was striking melodiously from a church tower, as the little troop descended a gentle hill and came to the bank of the Seine.

A stone bridge, with a quaint group of wooden houses at the end nearest them, attracted Frank's attention. He heard the sound of singing, and could see dimly masses of men moving to and fro.

"What is that?" he said to the general.

"That is an advanced post," answered Dombrowski. "At this point the river only separates us from the Versaillist lines. Our good friends on the other side are very fond of shelling us, and you will probably hear the squealing of their tin pots and kettles before

you have been here very long. But I think you told me you have been under fire before; so I shall expect you to conduct yourself like a man. We will halt here for something to eat," he said, "because I am not sure that at the fort where we are going we could get anything before noon."

In a few minutes they were at the post, where Frank was surprised to see some two or three thousand men, well armed and uniformed, sitting or lying about, as if they expected soon to go into action. Few of them had taken any precaution to go under cover, and indeed there was no place to hide from any shells which the enemy might wish to send to them.

"Have you no bomb-proofs here?" said Frank to the general.

"No," said Dombrowski, "we don't require them. These men are to move forward at daybreak, and a few shells would not disturb them as much as so many flies. If one chances to get hit he takes it as his luck. It is the fortune of war. You know the old song. But come, let us forage."

The officers dismounted; the horses were taken to an extemporized stable by some of the soldiers, and the little group of staff officers pushed their way into one of the houses, where Dombrowski was speedily welcomed with a kiss on each cheek, by a huge bearded officer, who clasped the general in his arms, and seemed as affectionate as if Dombrowski had been his own son.

They spoke together in a language which Frank did not understand, but which Dombrowski told him was Polish.

"This is one of my old companions in arms," he said, "and he speaks English, too. He spent five years in exile in London."

"Ah, the little gentleman is English!" said the big officer. "You see, we are so glad to get the general back out of the clutches of those scoundrels over there at the Hôtel De Ville that we hardly know how to contain ourselves. We fully expected that they would put him in prison, if they did not roast him alive. But here he is again!" He uttered several joyful exclamations in Polish, and calling an orderly whispered some mysterious words which

ended in the spreading of a bounteous repast on the table, lighted by wax candles stuck in the necks of empty wine bottles.

And now the officers came clanking in and threw themselves down on the rough benches, and for a few minutes nothing was heard but the popping of corks and the clatter of knives and forks. Long rolls of crisp, fresh bread ("our own baking," said the big officer), huge Lyons sausages, smoked ham, cold chicken, and bits of cheese formed the *menu*, to which Frank did ample justice after his night's ride.

"You live like princes here," said Dombrowski, pouring himself a glass of wine. "You will find yourselves reported at the Hôtel de Ville as Sybarites, unless you are more careful."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the big officer. "We do not fear the Hôtel de Ville, here. We could take it and hold it with the men at our post; and if they don't get less tyrannical pretty soon, we will go there and take their places and send them to dig trenches at the front."

"Come, come, colonel!" said Dombrowski; "walls have ears, you know."

"Well," said the big officer, rising to his feet, with a glass of wine in his hand, "here is confusion to all the jealous ones, and success to Dombrowski, and may he soon be general-in-chief!"

All rose, Frank with them, and were about to put their glasses to their lips when there was a tremendous explosion. The room was filled with smoke, and fragments of plaster and stone fell all around the group. So great was the shock that some of the men were thrown from their feet, and Dombrowski's glass fell from his hand, scattering the wine over his uniform.

Frank found, when the shock was over, that he was holding tightly with one hand to the general's sword, and that his clothes were covered with a white powder. His first thought was that the room had been blown up; but presently he saw a jagged hole in the side of the wall, and through it he caught a glimpse of blue sky.

Dombrowski was the first to speak:

"That was a neat stroke," he said. "By the bones of St. Stanislaus! they must have had spies in our camp to have known that we were coming, for they dropped that shell just in the right spot; eh, colonel?"

The big officer was seated on the bench, and gravely examining his right foot. "Come," he said, "the beggars have given me a big bruise here. I can scarcely walk; let someone pull off my boot. I think I am badly hurt."

"I share your opinion," said one of the young officers, kneeling down and gently extracting from the officer's boot-leg a ragged piece of iron which had struck through into the calf of the leg, and was covered with blood. "Here, we must have this boot cut off, and you must be put to bed. Call a surgeon."

Frank did not quite understand. He released his grip on the general's sword, touched him on the arm to attract his notice, and said:

"Is it true that a single shell has made all this disturbance?"

"Hum!" said Dombrowski, turning a pale face to the boy. "I should say it had, and if it had landed on the table among us, we should never have done another stroke for the Commune, I assure you, Frank. Ah! there goes another one," he added, as they heard a loud report near by, and then a shout from a hundred voices. "Let us see what is going on outside."

Frank followed Dombrowski into the open air. Then, early breakfast being indefinitely postponed, the officers, after seeing the big commander of the post stretched on a mattress in a place comparatively sheltered from the shell fire, stuffed their pockets with the remains of the feast, drank a few parting stirrup cups, and prepared to continue their journey.

"Here, Frank," said the general, "is a souvenir for you. You can put it on your mantelpiece when you are safe back in America, and point to it as a relic of the Commune. See, it is still hot," and he handed the boy a fragment of the shell which had caused so much disturbance.

Frank took it, but dropped it promptly, for there was plenty of heat in it yet.

"Oh, no; pick it up!" said the general. "Wrap a paper about it, and pop it into that little pocket which you will find in your cape."

Dombrowski ordered the staff to move rapidly forward to the fort which was their destination, and he and Frank remained behind for a short time, watching the curious spectacle of a *vivandière* singing revolutionary songs to an audience of several hundred soldiers, who joined her in the chorus, clapping their hands in unison. The *vivandière* was a pretty girl with a loud voice, which had a vibration like that of a brazen bell, in which there was something so martial and feverish that it put a desire for battle in each heart. Frank, although he did not understand all the words, caught the spirit of the songs, and Dombrowski could hardly prevail on him to come away. He felt ready to throw himself into the struggle, without knowing why or for what he fought.

"Come along," said the general, leading

Frank back to the horse; "that girl with the bold eyes is bewitching you."

From time to time a shell came screaming through the air, and fell with a hoarse thud near or among the men.

"How is it," said Frank, "that you have no guns answering these saucy government troops?"

"Because the Commune wishes to save its ammunition," said Dombrowski dryly.

CHAPTER XXII.

AFTER FIVE WEEKS.

FRANK climbed upon the half-ruined wall of the old fort, and looked cautiously about him. Suddenly there was a noise as if ten thousand humming-birds were passing by. Then Frank felt as if a hot iron had been held close to his face.

This was a common experience to him now. He gave a shout, half of fear, half of derision; shook himself to make sure he was not wounded, then jumped down and ran.

At that moment Dombrowski came around the corner of the wall, and Frank popped straight into his arms.

"Ah, ha! I have caught you, Master Impudence, have I?" said the general, with a laugh. "Drawing the fire of the enemy, eh? Do you know what I would do to you if you were not just the dear little reckless fellow you are?"

As the general spoke, he patted Frank affectionately on the shoulder. "Come and sit down here in the sunshine," he said. "The wicked enemy cannot see us where I shall seat you, and so he will not bother us with his ugly shells."

Frank followed the general, and they sat down together. Dombrowski took off his cap, looked up at the sky, and smiled at the sunshine which deluged his pale brow; then he turned thoughtfully to the boy.

"You know, Frank," he said, "that I am a citizen of the world. I own no one country as my true home. Wherever there is a blow to be struck for liberty, there you will find me, and there you will see my sword drawn."

"But, general," said the boy, "I have long wished to ask you if you know that the things you fight for are right? Do you believe the Commune is right?"

"By the beard of Sobieski! but this youth is a daring American cub! That is a bold question that you have asked me, and one which it might be hard to answer."

Frank turned pale, and jumped up and

caught the general by the hand. "I know I ought not to have asked the question," he said. "I would rather die than cause you any trouble, you who have saved my life and who have hunted so much for my brother and grandfather."

The boy grew still paler as cruel memories crowded in upon him.

"Only think, general," he said; "five weeks have passed since you saved me out of that scrape, and not a word has been heard from Grandpa Drubal yet. Oh, he must be dead!"

The general hung his head sorrowfully and made no answer.

"Do tell me what you think, general!" cried Frank, stamping on the ground in his impatience and grief.

"Don't let us talk of that just now, Frank," said the general. "You know that I have done, and am still doing, all that is possible to find your dear ones. The consul and the minister have been very diligent in their search. Your banker in America only answered our despatch to say that Grandpa Drubal's signature was the only one he

could honor. Not much help there! Listen, Frank! Great events are at hand, and the time has come for us to separate. I should be doing you a wrong by keeping you here any longer."

As he spoke a shell fell with a hiss in a trench not far from where they sat.

The general moved uneasily, then glanced at Frank, as if to make sure that the boy had not observed his nervousness.

"Do you know," he said, "that sometimes I fear I no longer bear a charmed life? Any little musketry fire galls me now. The groan of a shell, as it sinks into the soil, gives me a great start. Once it was not so. In the Caucasus I laughed at the bullets of the tribesmen. In the insurrection at Warsaw a man fired a pistol in my face, and the bullet did me no harm. On the way to Siberia a gendarme tried to stab me in the back with his bayonet, but his weapon made no wound. I thought, as an old fortune-teller once told me, that my life was enchanted; but now," (he drew the boy closer to his side, and leaned his head for a little upon Frank's shoulder)—

"now," he continued with a sigh, "it is different. Frank, I shall not come out of this. The bullet is cast which will kill me."

"And that," said Frank, "is the reason why you wish me to leave you? General, do you think I would run away from you when you are in trouble, after all that you have done for me?"

Frank's eyes flashed and his lips quivered.

"No, my poor Frank; I know that you have a kind heart, but what will become of you when I am no longer here to protect you? We must think of that."

They sat motionless together for some time. The beautiful May sunshine was sweeping in great waves over the plateau of Chatillon, and down the gently sloping hills, now all delicately clothed in living green, and up the steep banks of Bellevue and Meudon, where the Versaillists were intrenched.

It ran in rippling glory along the gray and brownish yellow walls of old Fort Montrouge, which the Communists had so fiercely defended, but which was now in the hands of their enemies.

It fell as gently as a benediction on the trenches which the Prussians had left behind them, and from which Paris was now defying Versailles, and it seemed to enfold the general of the insurrection and the American boy in a tender glory.

"See, Frank!" said the general, starting up, "the whole sky is streaked with gold. But it seems to me there is blood in it, lad. Blood!" he said, staring at vacancy for a moment, like one startled by a vision. Then he rubbed his eyes, seated himself, and drawing a printed form from his vest pocket, wrote a few words.

"Look, Frank!" he said, "this is a 'safe-conduct,' good anywhere within our lines. I want you to take it and go as fast as you can to the Prussian outposts at St. Denis. When you get there go boldly to them; send for an officer and ask protection as an American, until—until the troubles here are over. Will you not do that for my sake? Here is money enough to last you for a month." He smiled sadly. "I think one or the other of us, Communist or Versaillist, will have given in before that."

He pushed the paper and money into Frank's hand, but Frank held his head down, and would not speak for some minutes.

"Come, Frank," at last said the general, impatiently, "you know I must be going my rounds."

Frank seized the general's hand, and gripped it convulsively.

"Why, Frank," said Dombrowski, "you have a man's grasp already! These weeks of misfortune have made a man of you. I should hardly recognize you as the slip of a boy whom I took out of the hands of the mob at the church. That was a close shave, as you English-speaking folks say, wasn't it? Ah, ha! A great phrase, that 'close shave,' eh?"

"I would like to think a few minutes, general, before I accept the safe-conduct. May I do so? When you come back from your rounds, I will give you my answer."

"As you please, Frank; but remember, Dombrowski's luck is gone. Something tells me so. A charmed life no longer! Look at all those blood-stains in the sky. If I cannot

protect my own life when the final struggle comes, how can I protect you?"

A sigh choked him. He turned away, and Frank was left alone in a corner of the redoubt, to meditate on his strange adventures.

The sense of loneliness now returned with new force upon the boy. But Dombrowski had said truly; the few weeks of adventure had transformed the lad into a resolute and purposeful youth, who had almost the strength of a man, and abundant courage.

Frank felt that it would be but a poor use of these qualities, of the possession of which he felt sure, to run away to the German lines when his grandfather and his brother were perhaps in sorest trouble—possibly at that moment hunting for him. And now came up the image of the father for whom they were all searching, and he remembered that he had spoken vaguely of this to his kind protector.

"Surely," he thought, "when Dombrowski knows something about my father's history, he will see that I have the strongest motive for going back into Paris, and that I ought to blame myself for ever having gone away."

Yet when the boy looked carefully over the weeks which he had spent with Dombrowski, he could not find a single day in which he could have got back to the walls of the great city. Each morning had its alarm, its skirmishes, its shell fire, its hundred little mischances and annoyances so common in war, and the day was gone before a resolve could be taken. Sometimes they had been without food for half a day or a day. The work of foraging had been so great that they had had but little time to think of anything else, and yet the poor boy continually reproached himself as if he were a deserter, when really he had been the victim of circumstances.

But now that he was at the parting of the ways one thing took up his whole attention. "What if I could find father," he thought, "and we together could go on hunting for Grandpa Drubal and little Will? I am sure that we could discover them, even if we had to turn over every stone in Paris."

His mind was so intent on this thought that he scarcely heard the general's light footsteps when Dombrowski came back from his rounds,

and, touching him on the shoulder, said cheerfully:

"Well, Frank, you have been alone here an hour, and have had time enough to decide. What do you say?"

Frank turned to the general, and said impulsively:

"Something tells me that I can now find my brother and Grandpa Drubal, if I go back into Paris. May I not use the safe-conduct and the money for that? It will be better than to run away to the Prussians."

The general looked steadily at him, and there was a mist in his eyes.

"You are a brave boy, Frank," he said. "That is the reason why I love you, and I love you so well that it is my duty to tell you something. If you go into Paris you will be in deadly danger there in a few days,—in a few days,—but perhaps I shall be there, and," he added hesitatingly, "I might be able to look after you. Your young innocent heart can hardly conceive of the horrors likely to be enacted there. I don't like to think of them myself."

He drew closer to Frank, and said in a hoarse whisper:

"Do you remember the little hunchback at the Hôtel de Ville?"

Frank made a gesture expressive of disgust.

"You are quite right," said Dombrowski, with a grim smile. "He was an odious looking wretch, but did I tell you what he said about the fate of the beautiful building if the regular troops forced an entrance into the city?"

"Yes," said Frank; "that he had gunpowder enough there to blow the Hôtel de Ville all the way to America, and petroleum enough in the cellar to float the *Great Eastern*. But perhaps he and his fellows won't get a chance to use all these things."

Dombrowski placed his hand on the boy's shoulder, and, still whispering as if he were afraid that even at that distance the hunchback might overhear him, continued:

"Not only is the Hôtel de Ville prepared in that way for destruction, but the whole line of palaces and stately buildings, all the way from the Place de la Concorde up to the Hôtel de Ville, have their cellars filled with

petroleum, and the wretches mean to burn everything if our people should be compelled to retreat."

"Well," said Frank a little impatiently, "let them try it!" He forgot for a moment that he was talking to a general of the Commune. "They will be stopped, I suppose, when the regulars get the best of——" Then he remembered to whom he was speaking, and he stopped confusedly.

Dombrowski hardly noticed what the boy was saying. "My dear Frank," he said, "you ought to know that there are two parties in this insurrection ; that the soldiers have nothing in common with the miserable wretches who are simply seeking for vengeance on society, and are wreaking their malice and satisfying their envy whenever a chance offers. You saw the hideous grin of that hunchback when he happened to speak of 'Society.' Socialists like him would give short shrift to all property owners who happened to fall into their hands."

"Why," said Frank, "do you mean that they would murder them?"

"Certainly," said the general, "with the greatest pleasure; and I have now hinted enough to you to indicate how dangerous it will be for an imprudent little fellow like yourself to be wandering in and out of this great fight if it happens to be transferred to the interior of Paris. It grieves me, my boy, to let you go. You will be much safer with me, although our safety is but comparative."

Frank reflected a few moments; then said quietly, and without any show of bravado:

"Well, general, I have picked up some French since I have been with you, and learned something of the geography of Paris and its suburbs, and I guess I can find my own way along, and don't believe that I shall fall into any of those dangers you dread for me." Then he straightened up, and said in a louder voice: "And even if there were all these dangers waiting for me, and ten thousand more, they would not change my mind a bit. I know I ought to be over there," pointing toward Paris, "and the sooner I get there, the better; so, general, if you feel like continuing your kindness by helping me back to

the city, I will go to work. I don't think I have told you the whole story about my poor father yet."

"No, Frank," said the general; "I have never pressed you to tell it, because I saw it was a painful subject."

They sat down together, and Frank told Dombrowski in a plain and matter of fact way why Grandpa Drubal had brought them to Paris, and how unsuccessful they had been in their search for the long lost Almon Corners. He could not bring himself to say anything about Sny, whose mysterious appearance and disappearance formed such a romantic episode in their visit to Paris. Something hindered him each time that he tried to tell his new found friend about the gaunt, adventurous youth. Perhaps it would be putting Sny in danger. Yet he longed more than ever to know what had become of Sny and his pigeons. Possibly Sny had been killed, or was languishing in some Communist prison, or had, in his happy-go-lucky way, wandered out of the scene of the war and was already enjoying new adventures in some fresh country.

When he had finished his story, Dombrowski, who had evidently been much moved by it, jumped up and said:

"Well, Frank, you are right. Who knows but you may stumble upon your lost father? Certainly you two together could do much to discover the others; but, you know," he added hesitatingly, "that only a week ago we were told that the search for your grandfather and little brother had been in vain. You remember that, I suppose?"

Frank said nothing. His heart ached and his brain throbbed at the remembrance of this crushing message, yet he could not give up hope.

General Dombrowski took out his tablets and wrote steadily for a minute or two. Then he folded the papers on which he had written, and handed them to Frank. "Well," he said, "I suppose I must let you go. Destiny apparently wills it so. I have given you here some addresses at which you can ask for me in case you hear that we have"—he bit his lips—"been forced back into the city, or come back of our own accord. Do not ask for

me at headquarters in that case. This afternoon, if all is well, you can start. Now come and get some bread and soup before the Meudon batteries begin to fire pots and kettles into our kitchen, as they did yesterday."

Arm in arm, the American boy and the general of the Commune went down the little hill to the redoubt-canteen, and Dombrowski hummed, as they went along, a line or two from his favorite song:

> "Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten
> Dass ich so traurig——"

"Ah! I smell the soup," he cried. "Come along!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN LA GRANDE ROQUETTE.

AT the moment when Frank and the Communist general sat down to a meal of soup and dark-colored bread, while the shells whistled above the trenches, an old man, whose hair was silver-white, was seated at one end of a long gloomy room, in the prison of La Grande Roquette, in Paris.

His face was hidden in his hands; his elbows were leaned wearily upon the table. But he had that alert attitude which announces that one is listening intently.

In the wall not far from the long table at which the old man sat was a grated window without any glass. It appeared to open on a corridor, for the sound of steps could be heard, now feeble, now loud, as if people were passing the window and then moving away.

Presently the old man arose and went to

the window. As he was very tall, he could manage, by standing on tiptoe, to get a glimpse of the corridor, and sometimes of the heads of persons passing.

He stretched his lean, athletic figure so as to make every inch of his height tell. But all that he could see this time was the polished top of a rifle-barrel. And he heard the clink-clank of a sabre.

He thought that he heard a child's voice. But he had thought that many times before. Probably he was the victim of a fancy of the brain. Perhaps he was going mad! Why should he not die? What else was there for him to do?

He left the window and resumed his seat at the table. Noticing the water decanter near him, he poured the few drops which it contained into a cracked glass, and was about to moisten his lips when a tiny hand was laid upon his arm.

It was the hand of a baby girl of four, the daughter of a poor peasant woman seated a little farther down—her white cap awry on her glossy tresses, her head prone on her

hands, her lips and eyes swollen with continuous weeping and sobbing.

"*De l'eau! Donnes-moi à boire, s'il te plait!*" said the mite's thin voice.

The man understood the small hand, and the appeal in the baby eyes, if not the words. So he took the child in his arms, and gave it the last drops of water which they could hope for that night. "Drink, tiny fellow-prisoner," he said kindly, "and may it do you good."

The old man with the silver-white hair was Grandpa Drubal, and he had been a prisoner in the prison of La Grande Roquette nearly six weeks. Sometimes it seemed to him as if he had been there six years.

How and why he had been placed there he did not know. On that dreadful April day, when he had come home to his hotel to discover that Marcelle and Will were gone, and to faint in the ring of soldiers dancing about him, he had come to his senses in the guard-room of a barracks.

There he was confronted by three gloomy "citizens" wearing crimson sashes, who

informed him in French, of which he did not understand a word, that he was "in custody for conspiring against the Commune."

He shook his head and begged them to tell him what had become of Will and Marcelle; to let him return to the hotel and look after Frank; to allow him to write to the American consul.

His captors declined to listen to him. He was taken to a rickety old cab, placed between two men with loaded revolvers held with the muzzles toward him, and in this way transported several miles.

Then he was ordered to get out, and he cast a quick glance around. He was in a mean-looking square, bordered by small houses with quaint roofs, except on one side, where a huge grimy edifice with colossal doors reared itself, and seemed slowly melting into the dusk which was just closing down.

There were Communist troops in the square, at the doors of the prison, and in the corridors. Most of them were surly, and many were drunk. As there was no room for Grandpa Drubal when he first arrived, he was

placed in a long, low room with a curious-looking block at one end of it.

He would not have felt comfortable if, when he sank down upon this block, he had realized that it was the identical one upon which men condemned to death sit, when the aids of the executioner cut their hair and collars away a few minutes before they mount upon the fatal scaffold!

By and by Grandpa Drubal was given a cell, and found the word "Suspect" marked in chalk upon his door.

This led him to believe that his own case was not serious. "They think I'm a suspicious person, do they?" he said to himself. "Well, they'll find out that I'm not, I reckon, and then they'll let me go."

Although he was a brave man, he would have shuddered had he known the mortal danger which lay hidden behind that word "suspect."

But he gave no heed to his own peril, and bent his whole attention on the fate of the two boys. He convinced himself that Marcelle had kidnapped Will for reasons best

known to herself; and until his money was taken from him by the guards—who spent it in a night of riotous drinking—he was constantly preparing messages for the American minister, asking for help.

No answer came to his letters, because they were never delivered. They were destroyed as soon as taken to the office of the prison. Grandpa Drubal did not know that he was held as a "hostage," and that his captors were desirous that no official of his government should know, until what they considered the proper time, where he was.

By and by his ink and paper were taken from him, and, his money being confiscated, nothing was left him but his baggage, which was one day brought to him without a word. But all his books, and the pictures of the boys, had disappeared.

The Commune had set free many of the worst villains who had been awaiting transportation or the guillotine, and had crowded the gloomy cells of La Grande Roquette with poor, pious priests,—gentle old men, with spiritual faces,—with ladies and gentlemen

thought to be influential with the Versaillists, and with soldiers of the line who had refused to go over to the Commune.

The soldiers were merry, feared neither death nor the Communists, and laughed at their guards and sang comic songs.

One day Grandpa Drubal was taken from his cell because it was wanted for two smaller men, and was placed in a "common room" which had been the refectory of the prison. He was allowed to have a mattress and his trunk in a corner.

Into this room a hundred men and women were crowded, and obliged to stay there all day and night, except for a brief hour of separation daily. There were priests, merchants, journalists, land-owners, artists, soldiers, even workmen in their blue blouses. These unfortunate prisoners lived in daily dread of the "platoon of execution," which, they were told, would come for them if the Versaillists entered the city.

The priests prayed and exhorted. The ladies helped each other, and made the dreadful room beautiful with their self-sacrifice, char-

ity, and love. The workmen dozed, or grumbled at the wretched food doled out.

Sometimes the prisoners could hear the cannonade away among the hills growing louder, and then they would grow excited and would shout. Then the guards would come in and shout "*Canaille!*" and threaten to massacre then at once.

Grandpa Drubal's days passed in a waking dream, interrupted only by the thought that he sometimes heard little Will calling "Marcelle!" in his pure, childish voice. When he thought this, the tears would gather in his eyes.

Just after he had given the baby girl the water for which his own lips thirsted an old priest, who spoke a very little English, said to him: "You—make peace—wiz—God? I think we get kill one day."

Grandpa Drubal pressed the good priest's hand. It set him to thinking. Well, if death was to come that way, let it come. But Frank and Will? And his poor lost son?

At that moment he heard again, and so near that it seemed very real, the soft notes of

Will's tiny voice, calling, "Marcelle! Marcelle!" And then he thought there were other words which he could not hear.

He sprang to his feet and stretched out his arms. The worthy priest believed him suffering, and hurried to support him.

The bolts rattled at the great door, and presently a squad of guards came in, bringing with them a long procession of prisoners taken from other parts of the prison, to be crowded into this already suffocating hall.

Each prisoner carried or dragged a lean mattress and a coarse bag containing food and a few toilet articles. The lugubrious procession came tremulously forward under the shifting lights, and halted in the middle of the room, as if dismayed at the dismal prospect.

Suddenly a little figure leaped from the arms of a tall thin woman, who was leaning languidly against a bench, and came flying and shouting, flourishing its hands, and at last clasping them around the old man's knees, and sobbing forth:

"Grandpa Drubal! Grandpa Drubal!"

The old man bent and tenderly loosened the

child's grasp. Then he tried to take him up in his arms. But his privations had weakened him; he could not do it. So he sat down on a bench, and the child leaped upon his knee and began to laugh and to cry all at once and to caress the old man, until all the prisoners near by melted into tears and turned away their poor worn faces.

"Ah, thank God! thank God!" said Grandpa Drubal; "it was no dream; I was not crazy! It *was* the child's voice that I heard!"

And he clasped the child to his bosom and his great frame shook with his hoarse sobbing, while the good priest stood by, rather helplessly, patting him now and then on the shoulder.

"Oh, grandpa!" said Will, "where's poor Frank? Isn't he with you?" And the question seemed like a knife in the old man's heart.

"You shall know all about Frankie soon, dear," was all he could find courage to say for the moment.

By and by he set the child gently down and beckoned Marcelle to him. As she came near,

he saw that she was faint and ravaged with hunger and sleeplessness. Then he looked at Will, and observed that the boy was well, and seemed to have been tenderly cared for.

He stretched out his arms to the fierce citizeness, and she sank down beside him. "Oh, citizen," she said, "we have found you at last! But what is to become of us?"

"Marcelle," he said, "I wronged you. I thought that you had run away with the child. I was hasty—mad. I now see that you are a victim like myself. Forgive me!"

The citizeness took his hands and kissed them. And once more she murmured: "What will become of us? Perhaps we are all to die to-night! The guards are terrible; their looks freeze my blood."

"God is with us!" said the old man simply.

"*Oui, oui!*" chimed in the priest, nodding his head gravely. He had caught the last words. "*Oui*—God wiz us, even to ze end!"

The once fierce Citizeness Marcelle humbly bowed her head, and on it the good priest placed his hand, and laid the sacred seal of his beautiful benediction.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FRANK SAVES LAURETTE.

WHILE Frank and the general were finishing their frugal meal with a piece of Brie cheese, which was almost as hard as a fragment of shell, and with some sour wine drunk from a cracked mug, an officer of the staff brought a bad piece of news to Dombrowski.

He heard it with a smile on his face, and dismissed the officer with a reproof for being alarmed. But Frank could hear the general's heart beating loudly and fiercely, toc-toc-toc, and he saw that the resolute face was very pale.

"It means, my boy," said he, "that we must fall back upon my plan of a gradual retreat to an inner line of defences within the fortifications. And there," he added fiercely, after a moment's pause, "we will make such

a fight that all Europe shall remember us for another hundred years! Come, Frank, you must get started, for if you are out after dark you might stray between the lines, and that would be unpleasant. Ping! ping! You understand!"

Frank and the general went out, as they talked, to the front of the redoubt, and stood for a few minutes fully exposed to the fire from the Versaillist batteries, continuing their conversation and watching the grand spectacle before them.

. . . . .

The Versaillists had now been besieging Paris since the 7th or 8th of April. Slowly the old patriot, Thiers, who had worked so vigorously for the young republic when it was under the heels of the Prussians, in the dread war which had closed in January of that year, was massing a large army, ready to be hurled into Paris to grapple with the mammoth insurrection.

At that moment there were nearly a hundred thousand soldiers of all arms engaged in the siege, and commanded by such able offi-

cers as the veteran Marshal McMahon, as L'Admirault, Vinoy, Douay, Clinchant, and De Cissey.

These generals had at least had experience, and the commanders of the Communist troops had little or none.

Dombrowski and his fellow-officers saw the circle of iron tightening daily around them.

They were like that prisoner in a dungeon in some forgotten year in the Middle Ages, who saw day by day that his cell grew narrower, and found that he was to be crushed to death by the cruel iron walls moved by invisible machinery.

The forces of the Federated National Guard—that is, the Communists—were now rapidly melting away. Many a battalion which had its ranks full at sunrise numbered but twenty or thirty men at sunset.

Dombrowski had just been told that there were not men enough in the redoubt of Montrouge to man it properly. Wearied by the incessant fighting, the poor Communists, finding that they had been misguided—that the uprising which they had made in the name of

liberty and local self-government had been slowly perverted to a Socialistic revolution—melted away, and disappeared in the masses of Paris.

The Commune threatened them, but in vain. They returned to their homes, and only the desperate and resolute—the men who had vowed a terrible vengeance upon society—remained.

. . . . .

"Look, Frank!" cried the general, "isn't it a magnificent sight?"

Frank could not speak. His throat was choked. Tears swam in his eyes as he thought of the dreadful tragedy so soon to finish this terrible civil war, and to crush in its red embrace men like Dombrowski.

They stood together on a little eminence within the redoubt, but commanding a superb view of the beautiful slopes on which the chateau of Issy stood; of the grand expanse of Meudon's forest, fresh with the tender green leaves of spring; the great sloping hills, covered with villas and monuments, which ended at the Seine, along the bluish-green

waters of which tranquil stream a Communist gunboat was swiftly gliding.

"Do you see that gunboat?" said the general.

Frank nodded his head.

"I want you to take a private despatch from me to the commander. He has orders to put in at a point just below Bas-Meudon, and to wait for my messenger at nine this evening. You will have to get down to the stream before nightfall, and have a boat ready at the centre of the bend in the stream, where we have a strong post. Be careful, for it is a hot place! You will be right under Issy, and with the Versaillists close to you in two directions. The message is important. Will you take it?"

"Of course," said Frank.

"It was an afterthought," said the general. "I would rather that you had taken my advice and gotten out of danger through the Prussian lines. But since you have decided that you must go back into Paris, when you reach the gunboat, stay on it, and the commander will land you safely."

Frank turned his gaze to the vast city which lay basking in the charming May morning, as still and peaceful as if it were some Oriental capital from which all bustle and movement had departed, instead of a city filled with two millions of anxious men and women—with a desperate rebel army in its centre and an angry national army at its gates.

The mellow thunder of the cannonading seemed like the notes of some great organ, played for the delight of Frank and the general while they gazed at this exquisite scene.

But as they moved to the outer line of the redoubt, where a few Communists were still popping through the loopholes at the Versaillist advanced batteries hardly five hundred yards away, a rude reminder of the danger of war came to them in the shape of a shell, which slid along the ground almost at their feet, and then paused, smoking ominously.

The soldiers began to scatter in various directions.

"*Halte-là!*" cried Dombrowski, in his ring-

ing tones. "I am going to give you a lesson in bravery." Then addressing Frank in English, he said: "Frank, pick up that smoking citizen there, and pitch him back over the redoubt. Quick! No time to lose!"

The Communists yelled with fright, and motioned madly to Frank to run away. But he coolly picked up the shell, which was heavy and strained his arms. He made two bounds to the top of the parapet; then, with a tremendous effort, he brought the shell above his head and cast it down into the ravaged lands below.

As he did so a bullet whistled past one of his temples and cut off a lock of his hair. "Down, boy, down!" said Dombrowski. "That was bravely done! *Now* I know that you are the man to carry my despatch."

The soldiers cheered Frank, and crowded about him to compliment him as he came into the redoubt.

An hour later Frank started on what was really a perilous mission. In the few weeks during which he had been with the general he had learned much of the topography of

Paris and its suburbs, and of the relative positions of besiegers and besieged.

Now he was going to carry a message of grave importance. It would have been easy to go into Paris by one of the military trains which the Communists ran from time to time, without any risk of capture, and to begin at once his search for Will and Grandpa Drubal and Marcelle. But here was a duty to do for the general who had so generously befriended him, and he would do it, even though he might lose his life in the attempt.

The general accompanied him a short distance on the road, which wound down the hill below the redoubt and dangerously near to Issy, which was packed with Versaillist troops. After giving him the message he took Frank's head between his hands, and bending back, looked long and lovingly into the fearless young eyes.

"Good-by!" he said. "Remember Dombrowski. If you ever need me later, send for me. You are brave. Such things seem natural to me, for I am a soldier's son. Good luck, Frank! I hope you will find your

brother and your grandfather very soon. But it is strange,"—a cloud of worry passed across his brow,—"I have hunted everywhere, and I can find no trace of them. Better luck for you. Good-by!"

"I shall see you soon in Paris," said Frank cheerily.

Then, after a few practical instructions as to the dangers of the way, the general let him go.

. . . . .

An immense loneliness fell upon Frank as he began to descend the steep white road which ran just outside the redoubt. He turned to look back at Dombrowski, and saw him standing still in the middle of the road, gazing wistfully after him.

He felt that if he looked another instant he should turn back and rush into the kind general's arms. So he waved a last farewell to him, and then ran as fast as he could around a corner.

And now he began to see what a dread thing war is. There was not a live man, woman, child, or animal to be seen in the fields. Not a bird sang from any of the freshly bud-

ding trees or hedges. The villas were deserted; their windows were protected by wooden shutters, and their gates were locked.

But if life lacked, there was death all around. At the entrance to a thicket lay two handsome young men in Communist uniforms. Evidently they had both been struck down by the same shell, which had come hurtling and hissing from the batteries on the plateau of Meudon.

There was a pleasant smile on their faces, and the younger of the two had his arm about the other's neck. They were brothers, thought Frank.

Five hundred yards further down Frank passed a dead horseman lying beside his dead horse. A cruel shell had struck and hurled horse and rider into death. While he was looking at the man, who had evidently been a Communist orderly carrying despatches, he heard a crash in the road just below him, and saw fragments of iron flying in all directions.

Then he remembered that he was passing perilously near to Fort Issy, and had probably

been sighted by the Versaillists. He hugged the hedges, plunged into the thickets, took short cuts through bits of garden and wood, and so worked steadily down toward the Seine.

From time to time he heard bugles blown on the heights above him. The melodious thunder of the cannonade went on unceasingly, and seemed to lull Frank to repose. Once he lay down in a cool nook, and closed his eyes for a few minutes.

But he sprang up in terror, for he thought he heard the clatter of hoofs on the road. Had he strayed out of the Communist lines?

Yes, there was no doubt of it! there was a horseman approaching. Frank stepped into a garden which had a fine boxwood hedge, and, crouching down, he awaited the passage of the new-comer.

Presently the sound drew nearer. Frank pushed his head into the stiff box shrubbery, and managed to make a little aperture through which he could distinctly see the passer-by.

What he saw almost froze his blood with horror.

The horseman was a gendarme in immaculate uniform, with his shiny boots gleaming in the sun, and the tri-color on his cocked hat proclaiming his devotion to the cause of Versailles.

A carbine lay across his saddle. In one hand he held a cocked pistol; with the other he controlled the bridle reins. Horse and man were so trim and neat that they looked as if they were carved out of black and red marble.

Frank's eyes dilated with terror and a faint cry sprang to his lips. Beside the gendarme's horse walked, or rather trotted, a young woman, whose hair was dishevelled, whose shoulders were bare, whose face was livid with fatigue and fright.

The woman was attached by one wrist to a rope, one end of which was knotted to the gendarme's saddle-bow. Her other arm was tied down to her side.

She walked slowly and painfully, and uttered cries of distress as if she had been wounded. Frank's heart beat so loudly that he felt sure the gendarme would hear it.

For the woman thus dragged along by the gendarme was Laurette!

Yes, Laurette, the dashing and energetic *cantinière* of the famous 101st Battalion. Laurette, the cousin of Jules Raisin!

Frank had a huge clasp knife in his pocket, with a remarkably keen blade. He also had a revolver which Dombrowski had given him. But he had no idea of using that.

Like a flash he had made up his mind.

The presence of the gendarme was sufficient proof that Frank had strayed into the Versaillist lines, and he might find his way blocked by a patrol at any instant. But—to free Laurette! That was the thing to do now!

The road turned a little as it ascended the hill, and the gendarme checked his horse's speed as they went up, Laurette hobbling wearily along to what she felt was certain death.

Frank opened his knife and took it in one hand. Then he slipped off his shoes, and catching them up in the other hand, he flew out of the garden as noiselessly as a

ghost, and sped after the gendarme and his prisoner.

The gendarme, flushed with the triumph of having made a capture, and believing himself out of danger, did not look around.

Suddenly Laurette saw a lithe figure shoot in between her and her captor, saw a blade gleam, and felt the rope which bound her to the saddle give way. At the same moment the gendarme's carbine fell toward Laurette, as the startled horse sprang up the hill. She caught the weapon with her free arm, wheeled it dexterously around, and discharged it in the gendarme's face, as he turned and fired a pistol at her.

The blood from a wound on his head was blinding him. He put spurs to his horse and disappeared around a second corner. Frank flew to Laurette and cut the lashings which bound her other arm.

She stood for half a minute looking vaguely at him; then a flash of recognition came into her eyes. She seized Frank by the hand and urged him into the vineyard, opposite the garden where he had been hiding.

FRANK CUTS THE ROPE.

Then, beckoning him to follow, she set off down hill as fast as her weary limbs would carry her.

Frank followed joyously. It seemed to him as if, in finding Laurette, and saving her, he had gained a powerful ally in his work of hunting for Grandpa Drubal and little Will.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE ADVANCED POST BY THE SEINE.

LAURETTE suddenly made a sign to Frank to halt, and at the same instant fell forward so lightly to the ground that it seemed as if she were melting into the dusty soil.

He followed her example. Then came the familiar hiss and ping! ping! of bullets, and clouds of dust arose all around them.

Frank raised his head a little. Ping! another bullet came, and he felt a sharp twitch of his hair.

"The marksman wants a lock to remember me by!" thought Frank.

They were lying on the edge of a stone terrace or embankment, built to protect a large vineyard below; and they had evidently been sighted from some battery above, invisible to them.

Laurette was cool, and Frank admired the courageous stillness of the woman, while the bullets sang around her like angry bees. He felt like rising up and challenging the unseen enemy to come into the open, and he might have done it if he had not observed Laurette slowly crawling, for all the world like an Indian of the wild West, toward the end of the terrace. When she reached it she hung her head over, as if judging of the height. Then she raised her right foot, waved it as if beckoning to Frank, and swung over out of sight.

"Oho! there isn't far to fall," thought Frank; "and I'm bound to follow."

He crawled, like Laurette, to the edge, and saw her, sitting quite still, with her head against a tree and her eyes closed.

The terrace was twelve feet high, and Laurette had fainted after her rather hasty fall, which had, fortunately, been somewhat broken by the loose sand in a ditch.

Frank swung down, catching hold of a projecting stone, regardless of the bullets. In the vineyard they were sheltered from their

enemies above. But might they not be coming upon new enemies below?

He knew that if he were caught with General Dombrowski's despatch in his pocket, he would be pushed against the first wall and shot like a dog.

Laurette opened her eyes and smiled when she saw that Frank was safe. Then she shook her clenched hand at the enemies above, and managed to stagger to her feet, talking rapidly all the time to Frank.

He understood hardly a word that she said, but hearing Jules Raisin's name mentioned, he used the little French which Dombrowski had taught him to ask where the barber-soldier might be.

His heart beat rapidly when he learned from Laurette's pantomimic gestures, rather than from her speech, that they were on the way to his post, but that the route was very dangerous, and that they must be prudent.

And now they came to a narrow flight of ancient stone stairs, overhung with vines and shrubbery through which the May sunshine had not penetrated. Down this long stairway

they glided like ghosts, flitting past the entrances to lovely villas standing on smooth lawns amid fountains and *bosquets* of flowers. Once or twice they heard the scream of shells ; but they saw no soldiers, and Laurette became less cautious as they approached the river Seine, which wound around the base of the high hill.

As they reached the lowest step, Laurette turned to Frank, and explained to him in her pantomime that as soon as they emerged into the sunshine they must run for their lives.

When she saw that Frank was ready to lead the way if necessary, the bright tears danced in her eyes. She patted Frank's glowing cheek, and paid him so handsome a compliment that he would have been embarrassed had he understood it.

Out into the sunshine and away they went! There before them rolled the current of the Seine, which, near Bas-Meudon, at the point where they now were, is a broad and impetuous stream. Frank caught one glimpse of the wooded banks crowned with villas, the picturesque inns clustered in the gardens, and

the pleasure boats huddled together, desolate in the dreary war days; then he saw a battery, with trenches in front of it, and five Versaillist soldiers aiming at him.

He leaped like a deer, and followed Laurette, while the bullets hissed and spluttered. Frank's heart beat wildly. He felt that he would like to have a gun, and charge the soldiers so comfortably entrenched there.

A few more bounds, and they came upon the familiar National Guard uniforms, and saw a slouching sentinel ready to halt them.

Laurette caught Frank's hand, led the youth behind a clump of trees, down a few rude steps, past a long earth wall, through a bomb-proof sleeping apartment, where twenty Communists were harmoniously snoring, and then sank down exhausted upon the green turf.

Half a dozen soldiers rushed forward, uttering cries of astonishment, and a moment later, Frank, who was dazed by his long run, felt two strong arms about him, and received a hearty salute, in French fashion, from two bearded lips.

"Citizen Frank, by all that's strange!" said a familiar voice. And Frank, springing out of his half-fainting condition, recognized Jules Raisin, and grasped his manly hand.

"Sit down, Frank! You look like you had seen a ghost!" cried the ex-barber, who was now decorated with a pair of enormous spurs, which clicked tremendously when he walked, and whose waist was encircled by a fiery red sash, tattered and weather-stained. "*Bon Dieu!* Where did you find Laurette? We thought she had already reached Dombrowski with a message, and here she is back again."

While the soldiers were caring for Laurette, who seemed to have fallen into a kind of stupor, Frank told his story in a few words. He did not say that he was the bearer of a message from Dombrowski, but told Jules Raisin that he must go into Paris that night, and that he would go on board the gunboat when it came to anchor near by, late that evening.

"Gunboat!" said Jules Raisin. "*Grand Dieu!* Laurette was carrying a message to

Dombrowski to say that the gunboats are all to be withdrawn, for some unknown reason. More of the Commune's nonsense, I suppose! If we were to get a message from Paris at any moment to swim back into the city, I should not be surprised. Nothing is too mad, too imbecile, for those fellows to decree. To think that they should stop the gunboats—the only things which made our advance post merely tenable. No, no, *mon pauvre garçon*, you can't get into Paris that way. Better go along with us; we shall have to beat a retreat within forty-eight hours. And where are Grandpa Drubal and little Will?"

The tears which dimmed Frank's eyes were a sudden revelation to Jules Raisin.

He tapped his brow in the theatrical French manner. He shook his fist at some invisible enemy. He raised his hands toward heaven as if invoking justice upon some offender. Then he said:

"You have lost them, eh?"

Frank told his adventures since the day when he was rescued by Dombrowski from the mob which thought he was a spy.

Jules Raisin counted on his fingers, reflected a minute, then cried out:

"That was just the time when Jean Vercingetorix Durand was arrested by the Commune and sent into Paris. He was accused of being a traitor because we were beaten in a certain fight. At that time I thought that they would be likely to arrest Marcelle also." Then he slapped his thigh and shouted: "Frank! That is why Marcelle, little Will, and Grandpa Drubal have disappeared. You may be sure of it! They have all been put in prison as accomplices of Jean Ver—oh, that long-named fellow! It makes me wild to think what misery his blunders may have caused. *Tenez*, if I had him here, I would box his ears for him! But, poor boy, you look faint. *Hola*, there! a flask of wine. This boy is faint!"

When a soldier came up, scowling at Frank, Jules Raisin whispered: "A messenger from Dombrowski; secret orders!" and in a few minutes he was reposing in the centre of a group of Communist warriors, each of whom requested the honor of drinking his health.

Frank looked at the soldiers carefully. It seemed to him that they had already been drinking too much. There was a wildness in their looks, and a hard and drawn expression of the face, as if they were in mortal dread. Declining the wine, he reflected on Jules Raisin's words. Was it possible that poor little Will was languishing in some gloomy prison? Perhaps all his dear ones had been killed, and he was at that moment alone in the world.

The thought was so terrible that he felt as if he must start on the instant for Paris. And what should he do with Dombrowski's message? What was his duty?

He went to Jules Raisin, half inclined to tell him of the message, and to ask his advice. But on reflection he decided to wait. Perhaps the gunboat would come, after all.

Frank found Laurette quite recovered, and serving out rations of spirits to the soldiers from the miniature keg slung at her side.

As she served she sang merry songs, and the men, some of whom were soon going forward to the trenches, joined gayly in the chorus.

Jokes and puns filled the air. An old fellow, who looked as if he might have been a night watchman in civil life, danced a drunken measure or two, then went tipsily away, carrying his gun so that if it had gone off it would certainly have killed him. There was much embracing; altogether too much repetition of "citizen" and "brother"; very much too much drinking of spirits out of little glasses.

"What does this mean?" said Frank in a whisper to Jules Raisin. "Is this a picnic or an advanced post? If Dombrowski should know about this, he would have the battalion sent into Paris for judgment. I have seen him do sterner things than that."

"It means," said Jules Raisin, "that we are demoralized. We are cut off, and expect to be captured. The Versaillists hold off because, when they have attacked us before, the gunboats have steamed around the bend and shelled them. But when they learn that the gunboats will come no more, it will be '*bon soir la compagnie*,' as I have the honor to inform you. The Commune's game is up. But *Vive la Commune!*"

The ex-barber laughed hysterically as he cheered and threw his cap into the air. Something in his look made Frank feel chilly. He had seen hunted animals showing their teeth with just that expression. He felt deeply sorry for Jules Raisin.

"But there is no danger for the moment," continued Jules Raisin. "Come down here out of range and we will take some repose."

As Frank turned to follow the ex-barber, he felt a timid touch upon his arm. He looked around and saw Laurette, with her eyes shining strangely. She was trying to speak, but the big tears were chasing each other down her cheeks, and her lips trembled. Finally she succeeded in muttering a few words, and seizing Frank's right hand, she kissed it.

"She says that you saved her life, and that she would willingly give up hers to save you," said Jules Raisin, who appeared a little annoyed at this incident. "There, there, Laurette!" he added in French, "you must be gay! Don't you see how gay we all are?"

Laurette turned away, and Frank followed Jules Raisin to the lawn of a villa on the

hillside so hidden that the forts could not shell it, and out of reach of Versaillist bullets. Here a score of Communists were gathered about a piano, which had been dragged from the drawing-room of the villa to the lawn, and was now resounding to the vigorous touch of a captain who in times of peace was a teacher of music.

"Come, citizen captain," said Jules Raisin, "give us the 'Marseillaise,' in honor of my young American friend here, who has come straight from Dombrowski."

"Yes, yes," said the soldiers; "the 'Marseillaise,' and open a few bottles while we sing the grand old song!"

Half a dozen merry fellows rushed into the cellar of the villa, and soon came out with their arms filled with wine bottles and glasses. Frank observed with a sigh that Jules Raisin dropped into a broken arm-chair and held out his glass as the others did.

Then the great song, with its strident chorus, came to add its note of insanity to the general craze.

The red flag was flourished, and the men

danced around it like satyrs. The wine bottles were upset, and the ruddy liquid flowed down upon the piano keys and stained the player's hands, so that he seemed to have come red-handed from some murder to play and sing the "Marseillaise."

The boom of cannon, near and far, made a kind of refrain to the song. In the warm May afternoon the sleepy air vibrated with the shocks of the passionate voices.

Frank kept his eyes fixed on the Seine, a long stretch of which was visible from the point where he sat. And over and over again he asked himself this question: Will the gunboat come?

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE CAPTURE BY NIGHT.

WHEN Frank went to bed that night in the garret of the villa, where he tried to repose his cramped limbs on a child's bed which was too short for him, his heart felt very heavy.

No gunboat had appeared. Jules Raisin's gloomy prophecies seemed likely to be verified.

The night was moonless and black. The darkness was so dense that it was almost frightful. The window of the garret was open, and the boy could hear some drunken Communists snoring upon the grass below. Afar off, a fort kept up the useless booming of its cannon. There were no other noises. Earth and water seemed wrapped in dreamless, motionless slumber.

Frank could not sleep. Laurette was in the

chamber below him, and once or twice she called gently to him, in words which he dimly understood to mean a command to go to sleep, and not to worry. But the thought of the dangers in which the boy Will and his grandfather might be at that moment tortured him.

By and by nature asserted her sway, and Frank's weary eyes closed. He fancied that he could hear the whirr of a steamer; yes, the gunboat was coming at last. But it was only in a dream. Frank was sound asleep.

. . . . .

He was awakened after he had slept nearly three hours by what seemed to him like the crackling of wood in an immense fire. His first impression was that the villa was in flames. But as he grew fully awake, he realized that the sound came from rattling volleys of musketry, rapidly coming nearer.

He sprang out of bed and ran to the open window. Some of the Communists were running about whispering to each other. The musketry fire grew louder, came nearer. Then Frank heard an immense clatter of swords and bayonets, and at that instant one of the

Communists under the window sleepily blew a bugle.

Just then came a low "Hist!" from the trap-door through which Frank had climbed to the garret. He could not see Laurette's face, but he knew it was there.

"*Habilles-toi, et descends!*" he heard her say. "*Je vais tacher de te sauver la vie. Nous sommes pris!*" [Dress yourself and come down. I'm going to try to save your life. We are taken!]

By the tremor in her voice he knew that disaster had come. He had understood her first phrase, and he hurried on his clothes and clambered down the steep ladder stairs. Laurette drew him to her side, and kissed his forehead. Then she pushed him to the window of her room, took off his cap and threw it out. Frank looked puzzled, but in a minute it flashed across him that Dombrowski had told him the cap would be a sentence of death if the Versaillists saw him wearing it.

Laurette next fumbled in Frank's pockets, found his pistol and tossed it out into the dark, then, taking all the papers which she

found in them tore them into little bits, and running to another window which opened at the back, threw the fragments out. Then she lit a candle and, looking keenly at Frank, said :

"*Papiers!* Dombrowski?" and she made a motion of tearing a paper quickly.

Frank explained to her in pantomime that she had torn up with the other papers any message from Dombrowski of which he might have been the bearer.

"*C'est bon!*" she said, blowing out the light. "*Qu'ils viennent maintenant.*" [All right; let them come now.]

She threw her cloak over his shoulders, and forced him down on his knees beside her at the window which overlooked the lawn. There they remained, motionless, scarcely breathing.

Meantime the clamor of musketry had ceased. A silence as of death succeeded it. The Communists on the lawn were as still as statues.

All at once a torch flared out of the darkness; then another, and another. The whole

scene on the lawn sprang into light; the piano, with its wine-stained keys, the huddled Communists, grouped like sheep in a slaughter pen, and Jules Raisin, sound asleep in an arm-chair near the piano. Not all the noise of the fighting had served to arouse Jules, whose senses were locked in vinous lethargy.

Out of the darkness came a dozen young soldiers, in long blue coats and red trousers. The Versaillists! Frank felt Laurette's hand tremble, and his own was unsteady.

Next followed a tall officer, lean and angular, booted to the hips, and carrying in one hand a revolver, in the other a heavy oaken cane. Then more troops; another officer; a couple of gendarmes on foot; finally a group of officers, all with revolvers and canes.

"*Allons!*" said the lean, angular officer, in a harsh voice; "*balayez moi cela, et en avant!*" [Come, sweep this out of the way, and forward!]

The Communists had thrown down their arms; one of them held up a white handkerchief on the end of a stick.

The officer looked about him for a seat. He

saw Jules Raisin, heavily asleep in the arm-chair, and a sardonic smile lit up his fierce face.

"Is the fellow dead or asleep?" he said. "Oh, asleep, is it? Well, begin with him, so that I can take his chair."

Two soldiers went up to Jules Raisin, roughly raised him, and shook him once or twice. He opened his eyes, gazed around him, was sobered in an instant, and recognized his peril.

"Sorry to disturb you," said the officer; "but I wanted to sit down, and you won't need the chair any longer, you know."

He lifted his hat, and six soldiers formed in line and pushed Jules Raisin before them toward the villa wall.

"Why, they are bringing him in here!" said Frank to himself in amazement.

At that instant Laurette threw herself upon Frank and clasped her hands tightly over his mouth. Before he could resist, the sound of several shots was heard. Then Frank threw Laurette to one side and looked out.

Jules Raisin was lying face downward

beside the villa steps; one side of his face was covered with blood, and the colonel was quietly taking a seat in Jules Raisin's chair.

"There's someone stirring upstairs in the villa," said the colonel. "Search the rooms and bring everyone before me!"

Frank heard a convulsive sob and felt Laurette's arm tighten around him. He tried to speak, but his lips could not utter a sound.

Half a dozen soldiers, with their guns gripped ready for action, began to ascend the steps of the villa.

Laurette sprang to her feet; her lips touched Frank's brow; then, as noiselessly as a falling leaf, she crossed the room and disappeared in the shadows. It was as if she had suddenly melted into air.

In thus leaving Frank, in obedience to a sudden inspiration, she was really giving him one chance for his life.

All the other chances were against him; and had he been found with a Communist *cantinière* kneeling beside him, there would have been no time for explanations.

The conquerors were instructed to shoot

first and apologize afterward. And in nine cases out of ten they obeyed their instructions to the letter.

"I can't stay here," thought Frank, "and be caught like a rat in a trap. It is my duty to save my life, and to keep up the search for Grandpa Drubal and little Will."

He turned in the darkness with some vague notion of following Laurette. But now the shadows were illuminated; half a dozen forms sprang into the room, and three bayonets were laid close to Frank's breast and throat before he could make a motion.

The point of one of the bayonets pierced the skin, and Frank felt the blood flowing from a flesh wound on his neck. The next wound, he thought, will be the fatal one. He closed his eyes.

But the soldiers grasped him by the arms, and drew him rapidly out of the room and downstairs. He was pushed violently forward as he reached the lawn, and was brought to a stand by another push from a gun-barrel in front of him. He found himself facing the fierce-looking colonel, who, leaning back in

his arm-chair, surveyed Frank with a stare of astonishment.

Frank certainly looked as if he had been in a fight. Hatless, with his clothes torn and disordered by the soldiers' rude grasp, with hair dishevelled, and the pupils of his eyes dilated by the horror of the spectacle around him, he might easily have been mistaken for a young insurgent.

"*Bah! les jeunes aussi!*" said the colonel. "It is sad. But away with him! No time to snivel over urchins who fight against their country."

A heavy hand fell upon Frank's shoulder. One of the two gendarmes had seized him and was turning him toward the fatal wall, at the foot of which poor Jules Raisin lay cold in death, and near which a dozen other Communists were now slowly expiring.

The dreadful spectacle almost froze Frank's blood. He felt a sudden weakness of the limbs. But in an instant a spirit of revolt against this horrible death arose in his heart. He tore himself away from the gendarme, and advancing toward the colonel, he shouted:

"Take care what you do! I am an American, and if you murder me, you will have to account for it!"

"*Grand Dieu!*" said the colonel. "It is a German. What is he doing here? What is he jabbering about?"

"*Pardon, mon colonel,*" said one of the soldiers, respectfully saluting. "I think the boy says that he is an American."

"Did he say so? Hum! Living in the villa, perhaps. Ho there! Somebody ask Dr. L'Argent to come here!"

Two or three men ran to find the person in question.

"L'Argent speaks English," said the colonel. "That is what the lad talks, is it not? Or is he a Spanish-American? He's a fine-looking fellow."

Frank stood erect, with the fire of defiance in his eyes. He had made up his mind not to be killed without a struggle.

The minutes seemed long before the man who had been sent for arrived. He was a small, grizzle-pated regimental surgeon, gruff and unsympathetic, and he looked at Frank

as if the boy had stolen something from him.

"You can speak English to me," he said, with a kind of disapproving snort. "If you are trying to deceive us, I can trip you up, you know. I lived in Australia fourteen years."

Frank's voice trembled, but he spoke bravely.

"Tell the officer," he said, "that I am an American boy, and that he can't shoot me against a wall as if I were a dog! That's what I want you to tell him."

"How came you in a Communist post in the dead of night, boy?" said the doctor, in a more kindly tone. "Were your parents living in the villa there?"

"No, sir. My grandfather and my brother are in Paris, and I am trying to get to them."

The colonel moved uneasily in his chair. "We are wasting time, doctor," he said.

"How old are you?" suddenly asked the doctor.

"I shall be fourteen in a few days."

"Hum!" said the doctor; "that is not so

certain. You don't know the colonel here. He is a terrible man. You are as big as a French lad of sixteen. Show me your hands."

Frank held them out. They were white and clean. Had there been any stains, as of powder, or from the handling of weapons, upon them, Frank would not have lived to finish his explanations.

"Come, doctor," said the impatient colonel. "*Sacré nom d'un' pipe*, will you hurry?"

The doctor held up his hand. "*Minute, mon colonel*," he said. "This is a non-combatant. He is evidently American. Now let us find where he comes from."

"Well, doctor, you shall be responsible for him," said the colonel. "Take him aside and question him. And now get into line, you others!" he shouted to a batch of trembling Communists. "Do you think we can waste all day despatching *canaille* like you? Now up to the wall with you, and no more fuss about it!"

"Now, boy," said the doctor, "will you tell me the truth?"

"Of course," said Frank. "Do you dare to insinuate that I would tell a lie?"

"Easy, boy, easy," croaked the doctor. "You are not out of the bush yet, you know. What I wish to learn is, when you came here to this post, and from what point?"

Frank hesitated a moment. To say that he come from General Dombrowski seemed like courting death. Yet he must do it!

"I will tell you," he said, "if you will promise to listen to the whole story."

"Be quick, then! We shall be on the march again in twenty minutes."

Frank seized hold of the doctor's sleeve, and, looking him straight in the face, told him his romantic story, from the time of his arrival at Bordeaux in search of his father until his departure from Dombrowski's camp. He would have told the episode of Laurette's rescue from the gendarme had not the doctor clapped one hand over his mouth, and said in a strangely altered voice:

"My poor boy, you have said enough already to get yourself shot by my friend the colonel there. I believe you and I pity you!"

A tear ran down the doctor's furrowed cheek. "But if I were to tell the colonel that you have been with Dombrowski for nearly six weeks, he would leave you here with the others." And he pointed toward the wall. He reflected for a moment. "I shall tell the colonel that your brother and grandfather have been seized by the Commune, and that you had come out here to find this man,—Raisin,—whom you knew, in the hope of getting help in the search for them. It is a little disjointed, but it will do, *que diable!* The colonel will keep you as a prisoner, and you can go along with us."

"Where?"

"Into Paris, of course. Did you think we were going on a picnic? Come!"

He led Frank back to the colonel. "This boy is all right," he said. "He had strayed here to find one of the men whom you have just shot—a man who had known him and his family in America. The boy's brother and grandfather have been seized in Paris—no one can find them—and this brave lad was——"

"*Au diable* with your long story, doctor!" said the colonel impatiently. "I hold you responsible for the boy until he is turned over to the American consul in Paris. I can't waste powder and ball on him. *Allons les clarons!*" [Forward, buglers!]

There was a roll of drums, a clamor of bugles, and the soldiers fell into line and began to march forward with a swinging step. The officers scrambled along on foot, leading their horses and conversing in low tones.

Frank was saved.

The doctor drew him back a few yards and showed him a dead Versaillist soldier lying near the point at which the assault had begun.

"Pick up that fellow's cap," he said, "and put it on. There, now, you are one of us."

As Frank and the doctor passed the villa, a solitary torch upright in the ground cast a lurid glare on Jules Raisin's upturned face, with the blood stain upon it.

Frank took a coat lying on the grass and reverently covered his face.

"He was a good fellow when he lived in St. Jo," said the boy simply. "He had a jolly laugh. I can't bear to see him—that way."

"Why, that's right, *mon petit*," said the doctor thoughtfully.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE TOCSIN.

IT was the night of Sunday, the 21st of May. The air was still, the sky was warm, and the perfume of wild flowers drifted up from the fields and swept over the heads of a long column of soldiery.

There was a superb starlight, and Frank and his newly-made friend and deliverer, Dr. L'Argent, were leaning against the white wall of a cottage and looking up. "I wonder if little Will and Grandpa Drubal see those same stars at this moment?" said the boy.

"I am afraid not, my young friend," said the doctor. "For those savages have probably got them in prison, and they can't see through the walls. *Tenez!* here is a copy of the latest decree of the Commune. It was found upon a prisoner taken yesterday. You will see, my boy, that it means the beginning

of a new 'Reign of Terror,' as bad as that of 1793."

Dr. L'Argent took his folding lamp from his breast pocket, unfolded the delicate mica plates, set up the wax candle, lighted it, drew a paper from his pocket, and read aloud a document signed by the infamous "Raoul Rigault, procureur de la Commune," decreeing that a jury of accusation might pronounce penalties upon accused persons at once; that sentences should be decided by a majority vote, and carried out within twenty-four hours. "So you see, *mon ami*," concluded the good doctor, "that if your grandfather is a hostage, for example, he may be tried, sentenced, and shot within a few hours."

"Don't!" said Frank faintly. "Oh, why don't this sleepy army get on its legs and storm its way into Paris! I shall die if I have to wait much longer!"

The forces whose fortunes Frank now shared had wound around the bend in the Seine, crossed it by one of the few practicable bridges, and were encamped, as a part of a great army of more than a hundred thousand

men, in the peninsula formed by the Seine's ox-bow.

On this beautiful May night there was less clamor from the forts than usual. The serpents still went hissing through the sky; the rat-tat-tat-tat of platoon firing was heard now and then. But it would not have been hard to persuade anyone, in presence of the unwonted, comparative stillness, that a truce had been declared, and that someone was calling off the fighters.

The army lay but a short distance from the walls of Paris, which arose, dim, vast, and formidable, in the uncertain light. Here and there breaches had been made by the incessant cannonading of the Versaillists, and it was understood than an assault was soon to be begun.

Someone passed the spot where the doctor and Frank were standing.

"*Bon jour, docteur!*" said a voice. "Great news! Dombrowski has been driven from his headquarters at La Muette. They say that he has concentrated everything upon an inner line of defences. We shall soon

have the walls now, and then we will smoke him out."

"That's good," said the doctor. And he repeated the news to Frank.

The boy's heart gave a leap, and he choked down a sob, as he thought of Dombrowski's almost certain fate.

But he felt that the doctor's searching eyes were upon him, and so he remained outwardly calm. He was thinking of Laurette, also, with a pang of regret. Had the little woman been shot and left by the roadside, like so many others whom Frank had seen in the ghastly forty-eight hours since Jules Raisin's outpost had been taken?

He could not believe that she was dead. Something told him that he was to see Laurette again.

Frank took a walk with the doctor through the vast camp. In truth, the army had merely halted in a rude bivouac, impatient for the assault almost certain to come with day. The soldiers, most of them young and inexperienced in campaigning, were lying on the ground, grumbling at their hard luck.

The artillerymen slept beneath their cannon and ammunition wagons. The horses were not unhitched. The regiments of *gendarmerie* were snugly drawn together, and the men were busy polishing their boots, saddles, and holsters.

When midnight brought a light wind blowing directly from Paris the doctor's quick ear caught an unaccustomed sound. He stopped as he was about to step over a cavalryman who, wrapped in his cloak, was lying by the roadside, with his horse's lariat held tightly in his hand.

"Was not that the clang of a bell, Monsieur Frank?" he asked, in an excited tone.

Frank listened. Half a minute later the mellow sound of a great brazen bell was heard, rich, resonant, inspiring.

"It must be a huge bell to be heard so clearly away out here," said Frank.

"I believe you. Ah, there goes another, lighter in tone! Aha! aha! I understand! We have them, Monsieur Frank! The town is ours—ours!"

Frank did not fully understand, and he said so. And as he turned to the doctor for explanation, once more came the mellow hum which seemed to thrill all the air.

"What does it mean?" said the doctor, dancing up and down, and flourishing his cap in the air. "It means that the tocsin is ringing; that the alarm bells are sounding; that the deep Hum-m-m which you hear is the 'bourdon,' the humble-bee of the cathedral of Notre Dame; that in ten minutes every belfry in Paris will be sending out its wildest music! And what does that mean, Monsieur Frank? Why, it means that our troops are already in the city—in Paris; and that signifies that the Commune will soon be no more!"

Frank began to understand. The alarm bells were ringing! Yes, not only the great "bourdon" kept up its musical booming, but from every quarter, from high hill and from crowded plain, from the cliff of Montmartre over to the heights of Belleville, and down to the black and frowning towers of St. Eustache, and away to the graceful spires of St. Germain des Pres, and round again

to the belfry of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, whence was sounded the signal for the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and so on and on across the reverberating spaces to the cathedral towers, and to St. Étienne du Mont and a host of blackened ancient churches and convents in the Latin quarter, rang and ran and swam and leaped and rioted the rich music of the alarm bells!

Paris was awake, and had rushed to arms to repel the as yet invisible enemy!

. . . . .

At that moment a little boy, tossing on his hard pallet in the gloomy and crowded hall of La Grande Roquette prison, sat up and tugged at his sleeping grandfather's arm.

After much effort he succeeded in awakening the good old man, who was worn out with watching and worrying, and who had been sleeping as he used to sleep on the frontier after days of anxious vigil.

"What is it, Will?" said Grandpa Drubal in a low voice, and drawing the little figure to his broad breast.

"What are all the bells ringing for, grandpa?" said Will.

Grandpa Drubal was thoroughly aroused in an instant. He sat up and listened intently.

He knew that it was an alarm, but he could form no idea of its importance. No news came to them unless a prisoner brought it, and there had been no fresh arrivals for two days.

"I reckon there must be a fire somewhere, Will," he answered, turning his face away, so that the boy might not see how his lips trembled. For the thought suddenly came to him that there might be an attempt to rescue the prisoners, and in that case he knew that their ferocious guards would massacre them all.

"Ho! that isn't a fire!" said Will, in his clear, silvery tones; "it's more than that, I'll bet! Hear that great big bell, grandpa, that keeps saying, b-r-r-oum! b-r-r-oum! And then those little ones that go Tingle, tangle, tangle-ting, all the time! Oh, dear, grandpa, why don't they let us out, so that we can see something? I'm sure we haven't done anything to them."

Grandpa Drubal felt a tear stealing down his withered cheek.

"Won't you ask them to let us out, grandpa?" pleaded the small voice. "I want to go and find Frankie? I know I can find him if they will only let me out. Oh, I'm so thirsty!"

"Grandpa 'll get you a drink of water, Will. Now, you mustn't talk, or you'll wake everybody up."

"Ho! the bells will do that fast enough," said the boy, and he pointed to the long line of mattresses on the floor. Grandpa Drubal saw that all the prisoners were awaking and listening intently. An old priest near him was seated with his head bowed forward, and his aged lips were murmuring a prayer.

With a strange feeling that the turning point in their destiny was at hand, Grandpa Drubal crawled between the mattresses to the table, got Will a glass of water, and was just sinking back on his rude pillow when he felt a cold hand laid upon his bare arm.

He sprang up and saw Citizeness Marcelle's lean and haggard face close to his.

"Sh–h! Silence!" she whispered. "The tocsin is sounding. The supreme hour is at hand! Courage! We shall soon be free or dead!"

"The tocsin?" said Grandpa Drubal. "What is that?"

"It is the general alarm! It means that the enemy is within the walls of Paris! Don't you hear all the bells ringing together? The tocsin! By this time to-morrow our fate will be decided. But we will save the child, citizen, whatever happens; he must not die!"

"We are in God's hands," whispered Grandpa Drubal. "Whatever happens, Marcelle, you have done your duty. Your care has kept the boy alive! Heaven bless you for it!"

"What are you whispering about, Grandpa Drubal?" cried Will fretfully. "You and Marcelle are hiding something from me, I know."

But Marcelle had crawled away again to her pallet, and presently the little boy pillowed his head upon Grandpa Drubal's breast and fell into a dreamless slumber.

And by and by Grandpa Drubal, repeating that verse which he had so often said in childhood, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee," himself lapsed into slumber, nor did he awake until the rays of morning sunshine were streaming through the narrow grated windows.

The booming of cannon not far away was the first sound that he heard.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FRANK MAKES MANY DISCOVERIES.

FRANK felt a wild, mad desire for action taking possession of his soul at early dawn of that beautiful Monday morning in May, when the great army with which he had been obliged to cast his fortunes arose silently and prepared itself for the march.

The order had been passed along the lines to move without bugles, and to give as little warning as possible to the enemy of the forces which Versailles was launching forward upon it.

The birds were twittering deliciously in the trees, and a blue, transparent vapor arose from the earth, enveloping everything in an exquisite glamour, as Frank and Dr. L'Argent made a hasty toilet in the kitchen of a ruined villa and prepared to take their places in the moving column.

Frank was hungry and feverish, but he felt the inspiration of that divine morning and of his youth, and he could hardly restrain himself. He wished to rush away through the fields and the gardens to the great breach in the walls, and then on and on through Paris until he had found his brother and dear old Grandpa Drubal.

But then arose in his mind the panorama of the horrors through which he had passed during the long period of separation; the hair-breadth escapes which he had had when in Dombrowski's camp, the terror of the attack on the villa by night; the slaughter of Jules Raisin, the disappearance of Laurette. What terrible things might he not expect to see and hear, perhaps, in the day which had just dawned? Would he ever see his home—his beloved ones again?

"You are very pale, *mon ami*," said Dr. L'Argent, giving Frank a cheery hug, "and I am going to prescribe for you. Come along!" So they went to the wagons, and Frank was soon served with a steaming bowl of soup and a huge piece of good bread. "Get that in,"

said the doctor. "You'll need all your strength to-day."

Then he gave Frank a tiny glass of cordial, thick, green, aromatic, which he carried in a small, ancient leather flask, and got for him some food to put in his pockets.

"Don't get separated from us even for a moment," said the doctor. "Remember that all the fighting which you have seen is as child's play to what is to come in the streets, out yonder."

He gave Frank a revolver and some cartridges, and wrote a few lines on his own card stating who Frank was, and his mission in accompanying the army. "That will save you, I think," said the good doctor, "if you get into trouble with any of our men."

And now the troops were passing rapidly forward, and Frank and the doctor fell into their places. When they came to the massive walls of Paris, looking anything but frowning and forbidding as they lay bathed in the golden light of the morning, Frank ran up to the top of one of them, after he had passed in with the troops on the bridge over the deep

moat, and stood spellbound, watching the great line of men moving like a colossal serpent along the dusty highway, in through the huge gate, and down past a few humble buildings toward the broad avenue where fighting, judging from the smart cannonade, was already very active.

"Come down, Frank!" shouted the doctor; "you will be getting yourself arrested as a spy!" and the boy bounded down and went forward as lightly as if he had been at the beginning of a hunting excursion in the plains back of St. Jo.

Presently the column was ordered to remain quiet for several hours, while movements were executed in front. Toward eleven o'clock the doctor took Frank with him to "breakfast"—the French always take their first substantial meal of the day between eleven and one—with some officers who had found a small restaurant just within the inner lines of the defence which the Communists had prepared, and which they had been compelled to abandon.

When they came out from breakfast, Frank stumbled full into the arms of a dusty form

approaching rapidly, and found himself face to face with—

"Sny!"

The two youths started back in genuine amazement. But a joyful shout of recognition went up from both at the same instant. Frank held out his hand, which Sny grasped with genuine heartiness and with a twinkle of joy in the gray eyes.

"I want to take tight hold of you, Sny," said Frank. "This time I should like to make sure that you're not a ghost. The last time I saw you, even shouting had no effect on you. Will you just explain yourself?"

Sny looked at him; then an inquiring look came into his face.

"Why, don't you remember?" said Frank. "Out at the fortifications, late one night about six weeks ago, you crossed the road right in front of me! I called out to you. You went along just as they say ghosts do, straddled a hedge, and disappeared."

"Oh, I saw you all right!" said Sny, without hesitation. "I could not exactly explain how it was that you were there with a lot of

Communists, leading a horse. But I was pretty well convinced of one thing; that was, if I was caught it was 'good-night,' and 'all-night' with me. So I made up my mind that on that particular occasion you and me wasn't going to stop and have any chat. And I just skipped the ranch." Here Sny halted, as if waiting for Frank to offer some explanation of his equally curious change of movements.

"But where did you go, Sny?" Frank said breathlessly. "Haven't you been in Paris since? Haven't you heard about Grandpa Drubal and my little brother, how they have disappeared, and that I am going back now to try and hunt them up; that I should have been left alone among strangers if it hadn't been for General Dombrowski, who got me out of trouble and took me with him; didn't you know all that?"

While Frank was talking, Sny's face gradually grew paler and paler. "Why, Frank," he said, "you aint joking, are you? I haven't been near Paris. The truth might as well be out now, I suppose. I had to bolt for the Versailles lines, as the Communists were

getting pretty hot after me. You see my pigeons had been kind of useful to those fellows out in Versailles, and if I hadn't turned and doubled a little oftener than the fox does when the hounds are after him, you never would have seen me again, I reckon."

Frank drew a long breath. He understood now the secret of Sny's pigeons; why the Communist spies had been upon his trail; why the little hunchback of the Commission of Public Safety had been wandering about Montmartre. In a few sentences he told Sny all about that small man, but he found that Sny was better informed concerning him than he was.

Sny's voice trembled as he said: "Look here, Frank: I wouldn't wonder if my poor birds and myself were the means of getting your grandfather and your little brother into trouble. You see, when they could not get me, perhaps they took the General, just to see if he had not some connection with the affair. And they are foolish enough to do anything. And you say they have been missing——"

"It must be six weeks now," said Frank tearfully, but with a rising resolution in his voice; for what Sny had just said seemed to throw some light upon the mysterious disappearance. Perhaps after all they were the victims of a ridiculous error on the part of the little hunchback or some other jack-in-office, and now that the troops had come in could be readily found and released, wherever they were. It seemed to give him a gleam of hope, and so he told Sny, while he hastened to add: "You know, Sny, I would not blame you if what you say is true; but it is all so horrible, —so like a dream, that it has almost worn me out. I have come back now to find them or to die."

Sny put his great hand on Frank's shoulder. "If they are in this town," he said, "we have got to find them. I will be with you in the hunt, and I don't get off the trail once I am on it. We begin now, and we don't stop until we find them. I reckon that's the right watchword."

Frank grasped the great hand, and seemed to feel a new courage coming to him.

Just then he saw Dr. L'Argent approaching, and noticing that Sny stood firm, and seemed to feel no fear of any of the officers, he said: "Are you all right with the troops? If not, this man here has saved my life once, and he keeps watch over me. I presume he will welcome you as a friend."

"I am all right here," said Sny, with a smile. "I have got my pockets full of passes from headquarters at Versailles. They are rather fond of me out there, for I helped them a good deal, me and my birds."

"By the way, what became of the birds, Sny?" said Frank.

Sny put his hand in the breast of his old overcoat which still clung about him, and drew forth one wily gray head with glossy plumage and glittering eyes. The bird actually seemed to know Frank, and the boy fancied that he gave him a friendly wink.

"Here is the old boss of all," said Sny. "He has been back and forth, between Paris and Versailles, so often that he knows every acre of land between the two places by now. The Commune will never know the

full amount of mischief that we did its cause."

"What is this? What is this?" said Dr. L'Argent, coming up in his cheery way, eyeing Sny rather suspiciously, and peering curiously at the bird.

Sny popped the veteran pigeon back into obscurity, and made quite a flourishing military salute, while Frank hastened to explain who and what the singular figure was. Dr. L'Argent burst into a loud laugh. "Oh, yes!" he said, "I have heard of this young man. He is quite the talk of the day. He must have had as many lives as a cat and as agile feet to fall on, or he would have been captured by the Commune long ago. Why, young man, they ought to have given you a better outfit than that, after all your services."

"Well, doctor," said Sny modestly, "I know they say that 'fine feathers make fine birds,' but my birds are all right as to feathers, and I thought I would wait a little before I undertook to set up in opposition to them."

"*Eh bien!* my lad," said Dr. L'Argent,

"you can flatter yourself that you served a good cause, and that you did your best with your Yankee ingenuity to put down the worst set of brigands that ever infested Europe. If I can be of any use to you while we are polishing off the rascals, just count on me."

"Thank you, doctor," said Sny, saluting again. "I am all right. I want to help this young man to find his folks. Then I guess I shall turn my head toward the 'land of the free and the home of the brave.' But I reckon the first thing we have to do is to see this skirmish through, and I believe it will be an uncommon lively one."

"I wager you it will, my lad," said the doctor, rolling his Australian English upon his tongue as if he liked the sound of it.

. . . . . .

Crash! The struggle had begun in earnest now. Frank's blood was up, and he was regardless of consequences.

He had twice been shot at from the windows of houses. A bullet had gone through his coat sleeve, but had not wounded him. Another had cut off a lock of hair which hung

loosely upon his forehead, while he was waving his cap to call Dr. L'Argent to attend some wounded men.

He was working with fevered energy beside the good doctor, who cared as little for bullets as for flies. "Bah!" he said, "a bullet is a prejudice. If you do not believe in it, it does not exist for you."

But whenever Frank stopped to think, he realized that the bullets were very tangible indeed, and that they seemed to come from every direction, while the column of soldiery was making its way slowly down the vast and splendid Boulevard Malesherbes, and everywhere encountering a furious resistance.

Barricades arose as by magic, and were manned by resolute men, and women, too. The paving stones of the street were piled up six feet high; two rows of loopholes were arranged; and at the angles, small cannon were stationed.

The column of Versaillists approached one of these barricades, and threw out its *tirailleurs*, or sharpshooters, who kept moving stealthily toward the pile of stones. Then

came a flash from two rows of loopholes, a furious barking from the cannon, and the white street was stained with the blood of one, two, or three *tirailleurs*.

This was repeated over and over, the column moving on and up, finally reaching and charging the barricade, killing all who resisted, rifling the knapsacks of the dead, and sometimes finishing up wounded men who begged for mercy.* It was slow, merciless, heartless, terrible work.

Frank's heart grew steeled to the spectacle of death, and he consoled himself by thinking of his aim. If his grandfather and his brother were in prison, said Dr. L'Argent, nothing could be heard of them until the centre of the city was reached by the troops and the Commune was crushed.

It was late in the afternoon of Monday when the column, established just in front of the huge church of St. Augustin, began to see its way clear to descending the boulevard rap-

* After the entry of the regular troops, quarter was sometimes given to Communist prisoners, but three-fourths of them were afterward executed.

idly toward the Madeleine. Its progress had been checked by a furious fire from the last mentioned famous church, directly across the Boulevard Malesherbes.

Beyond it, to left and right, were labyrinths of narrow streets filled with barricades. The Communists realized that, if this position were taken and the strong incoming column of Versailles troops were left free to pour through to the central boulevards and the Place Vendôme, their cause would have received a mortal blow. So they fought with grim despair.

But the Versaillists fired solid cannon shot at the barricade on the boulevard, and demolished it slowly and steadily. Little by little its defending force disappeared, until but two women were left, loading and firing a small six-pounder on old-fashioned wheels. At last a well-directed shot knocked the six-pounder upside down, and killed one of the women, whereupon the other disappeared to the left, and the column rushed down, the soldiers shouting and firing.

As Frank hurried along with the doctor,

who was saying that it was time to hunt quarters for the night, the strange, wild scene was vividly impressed on his mind. He noted the high, yellowish-white stone houses, with their enormously thick walls, cosey iron balconies, on which were long rows of flower pots filled with plants, and the great central doors which led into the courtyards with their polished stone pavements. How odd and foreign all this was!

And how deathly silent were those spacious houses, from which life and light had gone away! In the street with its vast sidewalks, the double rows of trees and military lines of painted *kiosques*, its green-painted benches, and its general air of delightful repose the dead soldiers were piled here and there. One —a mere youth—was standing against a sycamore tree in front of which he had been shot. His coat had caught upon a nail which some boy had driven into the tree, and there he stood, dead, and glaring with stony eyes upon the Madeleine colonnade, not far away.

The column halted suddenly. Night was coming on. Frank observed with surprise

that a barricade was rising a hundred yards to the rear of the old one. The sharpshooters were busy, but the troops were getting quartered in the deserted houses, and had received orders to get into the upper stories as quickly as possible. From these points they might control some of the barricades.

Frank and the doctor and Sny were billeted, late in the evening, in a great mansion which formed an "ilot" or islet in the Parisian ocean, fronting on four streets.

The entrance was on the Boulevard Malesherbes, and Frank and his companions were not sorry when they had picked their way over some men of the artillery who were already sound asleep on the pavement, and had got into the great house and shut the ponderous street door.

In the porter's lodge the doctor found three officers whom he knew, drinking a bottle of red wine and playing at cards. "The house appears deserted," they said. "Make your way upstairs, and if you find an apartment vacant, take it. But don't show any light at a window opening on the street."

They had reached the sixth floor of the mansion before they found any signs of life. Houses like this one are usually built with two very large suites of rooms, or *appartements*, on each floor. The door opens from the landing into a handsome antechamber, from which there is access to the drawing-room, and then, by corridors, to the more private chambers, arranged *en suite* along the front, so that each has abundant air and light.

"Here is a door open, Frank," said the doctor. "B-r-r-r! I feel as hungry as I ever did on the Australian plains. These people here must give us food and wine, or we shall become very cross, eh, Frank, *mon ami!* Ring the bell, Frank, *mon brave!*"

As Frank's hand touched the bell-rope his quick ears caught the sound of voices excitedly talking in English. His heart made a strange leap which he could not explain.

He gave the satin-shrouded rope a sharp pull. There was a silvery peal, then a sound of low voices consulting together, and finally

steps came toward the door. It swung farther open, and a tall man entered.

Frank was standing face to face with his own father—the father for whom he had so long sought in vain!

CHAPTER XXIX.

ALMON CORNERS REPENTS.

FRANK never remembered exactly what took place after that one supreme moment when he saw the half-glad, half-terrified look of recognition in his father's eyes.

But he gradually collected his senses when he found himself lying on a luxurious sofa in a handsomely furnished bedroom, which was filled with the subtle odor of some strange perfume, mingled strongly with the incense of Turkish tobacco.

He had found his father, and now here he was, alone and ill in this darkened room. What did it mean? Why did not someone come to him?

He tried to rise, but his head ached wofully, and his limbs felt as if he had been beaten. With a groan he sank back among the cushions and listened to the "swish, puish" of the bullets which went rushing through the

air on their mission of murder; and to the melancholy music of a bugle wildly blown by some desperate soldier behind an unseen barricade. Why was the battle still raging? Where was Dr. L'Argent? Had the father whom he had just found cast him off? A hundred questions arose and tortured him.

"I must know what is going on!" cried Frank, and, making a desperate effort, he arose to his feet, although a thousand bees seemed buzzing in his ears.

Just then a door opened, and a flood of light streamed into the apartment. Frank saw that the windows of his room were darkened with rich tapestries, and that the liveried servant who brought in the huge antique lamp was careful not to take it too near the window.

"Take care, take care, you stuffed eel!" shouted Dr. L'Argent, who was just behind the servant, "If you let the rascals have as much as a tiny gleam, we shall be having their bullets in here all night long. And, for my part, I want a decent night's rest. My eyes feel as if they were filled with red-hot sealing-

wax, and my legs as if someone had been sticking hot needles in them. Ah, Frank! *mon ami!* Awake, *n'est-ce pas?* Ah, the doctor's little sleeping draught did you good, eh? And I say, my boy, what an adventure! Hunting a lodging in war time and finding a father, hey? You are a veritable hero of romance in real life. Here, drink this cordial!" cried the good doctor, finding a restorative in his pocket case, "and then you may perhaps see your papa. But no excitement! Remember, I am your physician."

"What time is it?" asked Frank wearily.

"My dear boy, it is exactly three hours and two minutes since you did me the honor to faint in my arms, being constrained to such a weakness, I suppose, by the sudden vision of the paternal ancestor whom you least expected to see. Ah, here he comes at last! I am going downstairs to take a look at the situation, and I leave you to renew your acquaintance with monsieur, your papa. *Au revoir!*"

And Dr. L'Argent tripped away before Frank could stop him.

The *portières* at the door parted, and Frank's father stepped in. He was richly and fashionably dressed; his mustache was waxed and curled upward at the ends; his slender white hands were adorned with costly rings; his eyes were brilliant, but hard and almost cruel in their stare. Frank could see that his father held his hands clenched as if he were suffering from some great emotion.

He stretched out his arms to his father, but said not a word. It seemed to him as if, when he ventured to speak, the whole scene—the rich room, the beloved father, all—would disappear by enchantment, as he almost feared that they had been brought to him.

"My poor boy!" said Almon Corners, coming hastily forward and throwing himself on his knees beside Frank, "to think that I should find you, or that you should find me—like this. To think that you should have been hunting for me, and should have been thrust into such dreadful adventures in this horrible war time! Oh, Frank! Frank! can you ever forgive me for running away. Say that you can, that you will!"

"There is nothing to forgive, father," said Frank, throwing his arms about Almon Corners' neck, and drawing the face to his own. "You knew best what you had to do. Only—it made Grandpa Drubal suffer so."

Almon Corners was silent for a moment. Then he said in a broken voice: "And how did you manage to recognize me? Am I not —much changed?"

"I knew you instantly, papa, because you are just like the picture which we have at home—you know—the one taken in St. Louis. I should have known you anywhere."

"My brave boy! To cross seas and throw yourself into these terrible dangers, and all for me!"

He groaned aloud, and hid his face in his hands.

At this moment a second servant, more richly dressed than the one who had brought in the lamp, came in with a silver salver loaded with dainty food, and placed it upon a low table close beside Frank's sofa. Then he made a graceful bow and retired.

The aroma of a splendid cup of tea, and of

a superb bit of roast chicken, tempted poor Frank. He sat up and looked hungrily at the display on the little table.

"Eat, my son; do eat something," said Almon Corners; "and if you could but know how glad my heart is at sight of you!" Then a shadow swept across his face. "But to think that I should have to welcome you to a place like this!"

He covered his face with his hands and shrank down into a corner.

Frank had taken up the cup of tea and was raising it to his lips. He set it hastily down and pushed the little table away.

"Why, father, what's wrong?" he said, sitting up and putting his hand upon Almon Corners' shoulder. "Have we no right to stay here? Is it not a proper place to come to? What do you mean?"

Almon Corners sat up and faced his son desperately. "It is not so bad as you may think, Frank, I assure you," he said in dull, constrained tones. "But I got caught into it and couldn't get out. Then came the siege, and we lived in clover here all that winter,

which was so dreadful for others. And then the Commune arrived, and we did not dare to try to escape, for we were watched. I swear to you, Frank, I meant to give the thing up and return home in the spring—I give you my word——"

Frank sprang to his feet. He seemed to have regained his strength.

"For Heaven's sake, father," he cried, "explain yourself! What is wrong? Don't keep me in suspense!"

"Nothing, my dear boy," said the unhappy man, who was now livid with excitement, and whose eyes seemed to send forth streams of light; "nothing, except that this is the famous Cercle Occidental—the Occidental Club—a gambling club, my son, and that I have been one of the most active workers in it for more than a year."

He bowed his head and seemed to await his son's reproof.

"A gambler!" said Frank, going to his father and taking his hands, and drawing him down beside him upon the sofa. "A gambler! So then—I am a gambler's son." He was

silent for a minute or two, during which he could distinctly hear the loud and irregular beating of his father's heart. At last he said solemnly:

"Papa, if we succeed in finding Grandpa Drubal and little Will in this horrible city, promise me that you will never let grandpa know what you have just told me. It would kill him."

Frank was not prepared for the extraordinary effect of his words. His father sprang up as if he had received a sword thrust, and stood glaring at the boy with eyes which expressed the utmost astonishment and terror.

At last he managed to command himself enough to stammer:

"What's that you say, Frank? My father and my baby Will—here—in Paris—now, in this dreadful time of battle and massacre? Explain, unless you wish to see me drop dead at your feet."

"Papa," said Frank, solemnly, "perhaps at this moment poor Grandpa Drubal and Will are in some dreadful prison, and may be killed to-day—to-morrow—at any time—by

the Communists. Oh, father! can't we do something at once to save them?"

A great change took place in the demeanor of Almon Corners. A softer look came into his eyes, and the tears glistened as he heard Frank's last words.

"Sit down, Frank," he said. "Tell me the story. I know nothing of it. How could I know?"

"Has Dr. L'Argent told you nothing?"

"Not a word."

"Papa, forgive me," said Frank. "I am so bent upon saving them that I am forgetful. Of course you could not know. But it is true. Grandpa Drubal has been hunting for you for months. We went to Bordeaux. Then we came here, and one day when there was a great crowd we got separated. And—and people think that grandpa and Will must be hid away in jail, some say in La Grande Roquette, or somewhere, as hostages."

Almon Corners sprang to his feet with a cry which echoed through the room and brought the startled servants to the entrance.

"My poor old father! My baby boy!

Hostages at La Grande Roquette! Why, they say that the executions have begun there already! What's to be done?"

He became cool and very gentle after a few more excited comments upon Frank's thrilling story. He put his arm around the boy, and made him eat and drink, and called him a hundred endearing names.

Seeing him in this mood poor Frank began to take courage. "Oh, father," he said, resting his head upon Almon Corners' breast and looking up into the eyes now agleam with fatherly affection, "I don't know as I understand all you have to reproach yourself with. But whatever it is, why not trample it under foot and leave it behind forever, and give all your strength to hunting for Will and Grandpa Drubal? We can begin in the morning. The soldiers will help us. Dr. L'Argent is my friend. Father, let this decide you! Come back to us!

Almon Corners drew Frank close to his heart. "I will, Frank; by God's help and yours, I will. So long as I live I will never touch another card! And when we go out

from here, as soon as those demons over yonder will let us, I will never set foot in this place again."

He arose, walked unsteadily to the door, and pulled a bell-cord. A servant entered.

"Archie," he said, "strip the room, pack everything, and be ready for the worst. The tide of battle may sweep through this place to-morrow. Pay yourself out of the money left in the drawer. I will not touch a penny of it. The Cercle Occidental exists no longer."

"Egad, Mr. Corners, this is a bit too sudden," stammered the English flunkey. "And —and really, sir—I must explain that there's a matter of a hundred pound or so in the till. And we cannot claim quite all of that, don't you know."

"Let it rot there!" cried Almon Corners, fiercely. "I came into this place with a ten-dollar bill in my pocket, and it's there now. 'Tis my own money; I earned it. And as for the rest, it would burn my fingers! Settle the matter among yourselves. As soon as the soldiers move we shall be gone!"

The flunkey, whose eyes glistened at the

thought of the money, disappeared, and Almon Corners sank down again beside his son, and when the dawn of Tuesday came, with its sweetness of air, and twitter of birds which did not fear the rumble of shell and swish of bullets, Almon Corners and Frank were still talking earnestly, and the father held the son's hand tightly in his own.

. . . . .

So engrossed had the two been in their talk that they had failed to realize the fact that they were sitting in darkness. The huge oil lamp had burned down, sputtered, and gone out; and the heavy curtains excluded the delicious morning light.

Father and son started when a light step and a merry voice announced the arrival of Dr. L'Argent, who came in, saying:

"Grand movement forward, *mes amis!* You will see a beautiful fight from these very windows in less than ten minutes. Hope I haven't disturbed you."

He was about to flit into the inner rooms, where he had been supplied with a comfortable meal on the previous evening, and where

the servants were preparing morning coffee, when Almon Corners asked him to sit down.

"I will have coffee served here," he said, "and I wish to ask you a great favor."

Dr. L'Argent listened graciously, meantime casting longing glances at the door through which the servant was to come with the coffee.

In a few brief sentences Almon Corners told the doctor his story, and his determination to renounce forever the life which he had been leading. The good doctor brushed his eyes and stammered:

"Fine resolve. Stick to it. Seen many cases like yours in Australia. Splendid fellows; get away from home; run to seed—pardon the figure of speech. By and by relatives come out from old country, touch them up; they go home and live happy ever afterward. Fact, monsieur! You are all right! And now we must see that fight, and then be off——"

"To find Grandpa Drubal and Will!" cried Frank joyously, with smiles chasing tears across his pale face.

Dr. L'Argent became very grave.

"It would be folly to conceal from you," he said, "that if your friends are really in prison and held as hostages, they are in great danger. Unfortunately our generals have been making very few prisoners. They are a little more merciful now, but the word has gone out among the Communists for reprisals—upon the innocent. Better counsels may prevail—yet it is not safe to expect much——"

Frank cast down his eyes, and his father groaned and turned away.

At that moment the sound of a bugle was heard, as clear, sharp, and joyous as if summoning a company of merry riders to a trial of speed.

The doctor sprang to his feet. "Monsieur Frank, no deeds of daring this morning, if you please! We must lie here *perdus*, and see what we can, without opening the blinds very much. I think we may venture the curtains. Our fellows have occupied the houses on the opposite side of the street. But from the houses below there, opposite the Madeleine, might come an unfriendly bullet. And remember, a hand to hand fight is likely to

take place under your very eyes. If we sweep this position, this whole quarter of the town will be ours, and we can move rapidly forward. If not——"

Almon Corners went forward and arranged the curtains with a deftness which showed that he had already learned something of the dangers of street fighting.

While he did this, Frank and the doctor strolled through the darkened rooms of the Cercle Occidental, and looked at the shrouded tables, at which there had been no play for weeks—not since the rich had fled from the wrath of the Commune.

And now Sny, who had almost fancied, since their arrival in the house, that he was living in a dream, came in, and Frank told him the story of the finding of his father, and why he had not ventured to speak to him about the long lost man before, and how there was now another, and apparently a most earnest ally in their little expedition in search of Grandpa Drubal and little Will. Sny listened with his usual coolness, and when Frank had finished, he said: "Well, if we

three can't fetch them out of any trouble that they are in, I reckon nobody can do it."

The servants, surly and pallid, were hastily packing tapestries and rich bric-a-brac. Frank had seen many a gambling saloon in the West, but his grandfather had inculcated in him a peculiar detestation for the vice of gaming. He came out from the close rooms with a shudder of disgust.

The cool morning air was pouring in through the half-opened shutters which commanded the scene of the coming fight.

Frank looked down directly upon a barricade at least ten feet in thickness. Behind it the Communists were grouped, hungry, grimy, determined. The sunlight brought into strong relief all their wrinkles, their torn and patched uniforms, their unkempt beards.

Beside an overturned two-wheeled cart, such as baggage porters use, lay a boy of sixteen with a ghastly wound in his head. The slaughter had begun.

Erect on the barricade stood a *cantinière*,

looking, in her jaunty costume, like a graceful boy. She was singing a patriotic song.

Frank looked sharply at her and gave a joyful cry.

It was Laurette.

CHAPTER XXX.

LAURETTE AT THE BARRICADE.

AND now there was a shuffling noise, as of hundreds of feet. "Those are our fellows coming down," whispered Dr. L'Argent.

Frank and Sny were surprised to see thirty or forty Versaillists stealing along the street, holding their guns with the stocks in the air, and making friendly gestures to the Communists.

The gaunt men behind the barricade stood to their posts, a double line of harsh-featured fighters, expecting no mercy, and ready to fire at their chief's order.

On came the Versaillists, still beckoning and pretending amity. Now they were fifty or sixty. The boys looked again and they were a hundred; yet again, and they were two hundred, and had nearly filled the street from curb to curb.

An old captain in jack-boots, and with a stout cane in his hand, stood just at the back of his men.

Presently the foremost of the soldiers held up his cup to Laurette, who stood singing on the barricade still, and asked her boldly for a drink.

"Ho, ho!" shouted Laurette; "since when do the Federals drink with their enemies? Not to-day, *beau masque;* not to-day can you buy any drink of me but blood!"

The soldiers kept on pressing in, and holding their musket butts in the air, and crying out: "Peace! peace!"

The gaunt men still stood to their guns behind the barricade. But there was a wistfulness in their eyes which showed that they had had enough of fighting. A moment more and they would have been irresolute.

At that instant there was a loud clamor on the Boulevard Malesherbes. The barricade was about to be turned by troops coming down on the other side of the great house.

Some of the Communists ran to discharge their weapons in that direction. Laurette stepped swiftly down from the barricade.

Next came a loud, exultant cry from the balconies, directly opposite that upon which the windows of Almon Corners' apartments opened.

Frank was startled to see the balconies filled with Versaillist troops, who were pointing their guns down into the barricade.

Now the old captain in the street below was suddenly transformed into a dancing and swearing demon, prodding his soldiers with his cane and urging them to charge the barricade. One or two rattling shots were heard; then twenty Communists leaped upon the piled stones, and covering the soldiers with their guns before they could reverse their weapons, they held them inactive, seeming not to care that they themselves were covered by the regulars in the balconies above.

Thus the battle was held so, moveless for half a minute, that it might have been photographed. Then came a wild yell from the barricade. The loopholes belched forth fire; there were shrieks and curses from the wounded. The regulars responded by a crashing volley from the street and balcony.

And then the curtain of white smoke covered everything.

"There will be work for us below, boys," said Dr. L'Argent, "after our fellows have passed on. Monsieur Corners, and you Master Sny, snatch caps from the first dead men from our troops whom you see, and put them on, and I will make you my aids."

The smoke arose, and Frank and Sny shuddered as their eyes fell on the spectacle disclosed by the lifted curtain.

A line of Communists lay mown down behind the barricade, and a few grim and ugly fellows, still at the loopholes, were preparing to fire again. Three women were lying as quietly as if asleep, where a volley had struck them.

But Laurette was not dead, for Frank could see her kneeling in the shelter of the barricade and supporting with one arm the head of a wounded man. Frank hastily outlined her story to Sny, as they stood looking at the spectacle.

A crash and a clatter of drums! The ear-

piercing cry of a bugle sounding the attack, and right across the open space behind the barricade, after they had swept it with a volley, charged a whole regiment of pale-faced young liners, their pots and pans clattering on their shoulders, and their officers pounding the laggards with sticks.

This great mass of soldiers once past, the liners in the balconies began to pick off the Communists left. But suddenly, both these and the men in the street below were withdrawn; and three minutes later the dying Federals were left to themselves. The fight had moved on beyond them, and the Versaillists had not had time yet to come back and finish them.

Frank's eager eyes sought for Laurette. "Let us hasten down, doctor," he said. "You can make Laurette a prisoner. I have told you that I owe my life to her almost as much as to you."

"Come, boy, come," said the doctor, and they were soon at the barricade, deserted by all save the desperately wounded. Almon Corners was close beside his son, and watched

over him, as they stepped within the limits of the Communist street fortress.

One grizzled old fellow gave the doctor a scowl of hate and tried to rise and fire a pistol at him. But his effort exhausted him, and he fell back and exhaled his life with a long sigh, which sounded not unlike the rattle of an angry reptile.

Suddenly Frank gave a cry and bounded forward. He had reached Laurette.

She was seated on the ground, and leaning against a pile of paving stones which looked as if it might at the least breath topple over and kill her.

"This is Laurette, the *cantinière*, about whom I have told you so much, doctor," cried Frank. "Look out!"

As Dr. L'Argent approached her, she suddenly drew a pistol from her belt and fired straight at his head, but the bullet flew harmlessly by, and in another instant the doctor was kneeling beside her, and had wrenched the weapon from her hand.

"Don't shoot around like that, my good woman," he said. "You might kill some of

your friends! Don't you know this boy here? He has told me all about you, and how you gave us the slip at the villa at Bas-Meudon, don't you remember?"

Laurette gave him a fierce look, and raising herself up with some difficulty, gazed long and steadfastly at Frank.

"The little American," she said smiling. "*Oh, Grand Dieu!* Why, he is kneeling beside me! Ah, they didn't shoot thee then, my poor boy? I am glad of that. Yes, I gave thee the slip that night. Ah, ha! I lay on the roof where none of them were looking, but I could not see the soldiers from where I lay. I was suffocating under some loose boards."

While she was speaking the doctor was carefully examining a wound in the girl's right shoulder. A bullet had left an ugly track there, and as the good doctor was taking care of this young tigress, he thought how he would have been reproached by his superiors had they chanced upon him just then. As he was staunching the flow of blood, Laurette raised her left hand, and, looking intently at

Frank, placed her finger on her lips, and indicated, by the expressive pantomime, which the lower classes of the Parisians so well understand, that she had something private to tell him.

"Poor boy," she said, talking to the doctor. "He doesn't understand half I say."

"Well," said Dr. L'Argent, "he has picked up a good deal of French, and if you value his safety at all, you ought to be glad he is in our hands, instead of in yours, just now."

"Ah, bah," said Laurette; "and you, Versaillists, are you his friends? Are you sure he is safe with you?"

"Much safer than with you, woman," said the doctor. "And now, we must get you removed to some better place. You might be shot here if any more of our fellows happen along. There, I have done the best I can for you for the moment. You had an ugly customer in that bullet."

"Yes," said the *cantinière* fiercely, "but we must take our chances. If we fight like men we must bear our wounds like men. But

just remember that if that liner had not sent me a bullet while I was giving that poor fellow yonder a drink, I would have driven you out of here, my fine fellows! But now——"

The doctor had already turned away from her and was attending to someone else. Laurette beckoned to Frank to approach.

As he came forward a terrific explosion was heard in the vicinity of the Madeleine, causing them to start and look up in alarm. Then came the cry of "Fire! Fire! Help!" from a hundred voices.

"Ah, ha!" cried Laurette. "Did you hear that cry of fire? The end is at hand! The cleansing of Paris has begun! The city shall be purged by fire! Its palaces shall perish in flame! And you, dogs of Versaillists, shall be burned like rats in a trap! Fire and flame! *Vive la Commune!*"

Startled by such vehemence, and by the expression of intense rage upon Laurette's face, Frank started back, but she reached out her strong arm and caught him and drew him down to her.

"Quick," she said; "listen. You must understand. Summon up all your French. I have a message from Dombrowski for you."

The doctor was coming toward them once more. Laurette at once lay back as if in complete exhaustion, and closed her eyes. "Wait," she whispered, "until he moves away again."

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE LETTER FROM DOMBROWSKI.

ALMON CORNERS staggered and would have fallen if the stout arm of Dr. L'Argent had not sustained him.

"Not used to blood, eh?" said the doctor, with an attempt to be gruff, but with an expression on his sympathetic face that belied his rough voice. "Never mind. In a few minutes the feeling will wear off, and you will think no more of seeing a Communist kick up his heels and pass into the next world than of watching a fly caught by the November cold, eh, Frank?"

Then the doctor left Almon Corners and attended a poor regular who was groaning with a splintered leg. With a few skilful touches he relieved the worst suffering until the ambulance could come up. "The leg may have to come off, old boy," said the doctor, "so screw your courage up to that point;

then, if you don't need your bravery for amputation, it will be all ready for use when you begin your fighting again, don't you see? Nothing like preparation."

Frank felt his father's arm steal around his waist, and he knew that Almon Corners was trembling for the safety of the boy who had found him and saved his life from wreck.

Almon Corners, usually brave enough, was dazed by this sudden plunge into the thick of the insurrection. He had been shut up for weeks in the close rooms of the Cercle Occidental, smoking strong cigars, and now and then glancing from the windows at the disturbed outer world.

And now, at a word, he set forth into the radiance of the May sunshine; he saw regiments charging across the broad steps in front of the ruined barricade; he heard the scream of the bugle; he noted the lurid faces of the young soldiers as they were pushed forward to the struggle which must mean death to some of them; and he trembled.

What terrors must be enacted; what obsta-

cles be overcome, before he could reach the remote quarter of Paris in which was the prison of La Grande Roquette, where his old father and dear little Will were, perhaps, now confined! At any moment, both he and Frank might be swept away, and then what would become of these loved ones! How did he know that Grandpa Drubal and Will *were* at La Grande Roquette? What if it were all a mistake? What if it should be impossible to find the old man and the child, even after the insurrection was crushed? Or what if they were to find them—dead?

Almon Corners was now suffering the penalty of his sin. As he had tortured his old father by his absence, and left him to languish in uncertainty, so now he was tortured by doubt. So now the filial love which had been nearly extinguished in his breast sprang into a leaping flame, and seemed almost to shrivel up his vital forces.

As he stood there, in an angle of the heaps of stone which had composed the barricade, Almon Corners felt as if he must rely entirely upon his son. It seemed to him that he had

all at once grown weak, and that Frank must be the leader.

"Come and give a hand here," cried the cheery voice of Dr. L'Argent to Almon Corners.

Glad to be aroused from his sombre revery, Frank's father jumped up and went to the doctor, who was turning over a big liner who had fainted from pain, and now lay on his face groaning.

This was the opportunity for which Laurette had been looking. She called to Frank quickly, and put into his hand a letter.

It was addressed thus:

M. Frank Corners, from the General Dombrowski. With all speed.

All Federals are required to pass forward the bearer of this letter, which is important to the Service of the Commune.

In an instant Frank understood. Laurette had seen Dombrowski since her return into Paris. She had told him that Frank might have been killed at Jules Raisin's outpost, but that she was not certain of it, and the general

had charged her with the delivery of this message to Frank, if she ever found him again.

Knowing that it would be dangerous to hand Frank the letter in the doctor's presence, she had managed to give it to him unperceived. Faithful Laurette!

The address of the letter was written in a faint, although a bold hand, and at the last it finished brokenly and hazily, as if the writer's strength had suddenly given out. It was upon the back of the folded sheet. Evidently the general had found no envelopes handy. In one corner, where postage stamps are usually placed on letters, was dingily stencilled in circular form, these words:

SERVICE DE LA COMMUNE.

Frank turned hastily away, and stepped around the angle of the barricade, where, unperceived, though at some little risk of chance shots, he managed to read the letter. He turned pale as death, and burst into convulsive sobbing. Brave and manly as he was, he

could not restrain the tempest of grief that arose in his bosom. Thus ran the letter:

TUESDAY.

MON CHER FRANK.

I am dying. Yes, Dombrowski, in a few hours, will be no more. All our proud ambitions, our high designs, my poor Frank, are scattered to the winds. In the Place Clichy, this morning, I got a wound which is certain to prove fatal. It is better so. If the enemy is—they say——

[Here a few lines were marked out with great black pencil scratches, as if the writer feared they might be the cause of trouble to the recipient of the letter.]

I have got my last bullet, and I do not care much, except for you, and a few other friends who know that Dombrowski was brave and true, and had a good heart. Laurette is here, and this my last message to you carries sorrowful news. After you left Montrouge I managed to find out something about the hostages. My poor Frank, there is no doubt that General Corners and his little grandson, your brother, are at La Grande Roquette among the other hostages. Oh, hasten, as you value their precious lives! As soon as you receive this letter, hurry to their rescue, wherever you may be, or you will be too late. The hostages are all doomed to execution. May Fate keep your dear friends and yourself, my poor Frank, and so farewell.

DOMBROWSKI.

In hospital.

Below was added in fainter, more straggling script :

The doctor has just told me that I cannot last more than two or three hours longer. I send you, my dear little companion-in-arms, a supreme farewell.

Some of the English words were misspelled, and, in one or two cases, so oddly written that they caused Frank much trouble to decipher.

But when he had completely mastered the letter's meaning, he drew himself up, shut his lips firmly, and seemed to be boldly preparing to spring forward into some new peril.

Fortunately, Dr. L'Argent was moving farther and farther away, his quick eye detecting the gravest cases, and passing over the lighter ones, so that Frank was able to call his father and place the letter in his hand.

"This woman brought it to me," he said curtly. "It is a letter from General Dombrowski. It tells us what we want to know."

Almon Corners looked up, almost bewildered by the sudden change in Frank's manner, by the assumption of generalship which had transfigured the boy. Then admiration and respect were visible in his gaze. He raised

Dombrowski's letter with a shaking hand, read it through attentively, and then sprang to his feet with a groan.

"This is awful!" he said, while the cold sweat stood upon his brow. He looked hopelessly around him like a wounded animal at bay.

"My poor old father!" he sighed. "And my innocent child! To perish so—and by my fault. If it had not been for my folly they would never have ventured into this labyrinth of murder. What—what is to be done?"

Frank glanced around at Dr. L'Argent. That energetic personage was fuming and raging at the ambulance-men, because they were awkardly handling a poor fellow whose right arm had been taken off by a fragment of shell. The doctor was likely to be busy there for some minutes.

The tide of battle had surged around the corner of the great church of the Madeleine, and was flowing out to the central boulevards.

Just at this moment Sny came up, his gray eyes blazing with excitement, and he stood looking from the father to the son as if hop-

ing that one or the other of them would invite him to some new adventure.

"You ask me what is to be done, father?" said Frank, his youthful tones vibrating with emotion. "Does this suggest anything to you? It certainly does to me."

He took the letter and turned it so that Almon Corners could see the inscription.

Frank's father gazed rather blankly at the words, then looked up at Frank with a flash of energy in his eyes.

Evidently he had caught his son's idea.

"Father," said Frank, "if we remain in the Versaillist lines until the battle is over, we shall never see Grandpa Drubal and little Will alive again. But perhaps there is a chance—" he caught his breath and manfully kept down a sob, "if we could reach La Grande Roquette to-day or to-morrow. And here is the very means—placed in our hands——"

"By Providence," said the father solemnly. "Frank, I understand. With Dombrowski's letter we have a chance of being allowed to pass anywhere in the Communist lines."

"It is more than a letter, father. Listen.

It is a pass. 'All Federals are required to pass forward the bearer of this letter, which is important to the Service of the Commune!' What more do we want than that, except Dombrowski's signature? And there it is! Not half the Communists we are likely to meet between here and La Grande Roquette will know whether Dombrowski is dead or alive, or whether the pass is for one or for two. It opens the way, father. Will you come?"

"Yes, but how? Ah, I begin to see the chance! Behind us lies a labyrinth of narrow streets filled with barricades not yet taken. You can see that by the fact that the troops are going round the Madeleine. If this quarter were clear they would go right through this way and try to push into the Communist lines at the back here. Shall we try it?"

Almon Corners asked orders of Frank, as if he were the superior officer.

"Yes," said Frank, "let us try it." He went up to Laurette, seized her hand, and when she opened her eyes, he said, "I understand," in French. Laurette looked glad.

"Come, father," he said, in a low, fierce voice. "Now to save Grandpa Drubal and little Will. I dare not bid Dr. L'Argent good-by. It might ruin everything."

Just at this moment Frank mastered his excitement enough to observe that Sny was almost stretching out his hands in the energy of his appeal to be taken along with them. He gave a great shout.

"Why, of course," he said. "Here is Sny, father. What put the dear fellow so completely out of my head? But I have seen and heard and been through so many things in the last few days! Sny, the best guide in the world, the person most sure of all others to get us out of scrapes, and to lead us where we want to go. Isn't that so, Sny?"

Sny took off his hat and fanned himself slowly with it. "Well," he said, "I reckon when it comes to getting through a small knot hole, even if it is in a hurry, I can do it as easy as the next person. And it will be a mighty small knot hole we shall have to crawl through more than once, I can tell you, before we get to La Grande Roquette."

Almon Corners eyed the tall youth curiously. He liked him. There was something in his face that reminded him vaguely of someone whom he had seen in his young days, when he ranged through the Southwest on hunting tours, and he could not recall who it was.

"Come," said Frank, "let's hurry." And he whispered to Sny his reasons for not seeing Dr. L'Argent again.

They stepped quickly over the piled stones and were soon in the street in which they had seen the fight at dawn from the windows of the Cercle Occidental.

Out of this, fifty yards from where they stood, opened another and narrower street, and right in their path lay four dead Communists in a heap, their limbs spread out, their guns fallen beside them.

"Papa," said Frank softly.

"Yes, my boy."

"There's our chance."

He pointed to the pile of dead men, and, at the same moment, he cast off his Versaillist cap.

"We must change colors once more, papa," he said, "for the sake of grandpa and poor brother Will."

Almon Corners was quick enough of apprehension now.

Five minutes later he and his son and Sny entered the narrow street cautiously and looked about them.

They were all dressed as National Guards. Frank had taken a cap, a blouse, a gun, and cartridges. Almon Corners had stripped the uniform off a dead sergeant and hurriedly donned it. As for Sny, clad in the uniform of a tall and lank Communist, who had probably been shot but an hour before, he had quite a rakish air, to which he had added by putting a black patch over one eye and drawing himself a little scar on one cheek, "just," he said, "to make sure that nobody who had known him in the quarter would recognize him now." He also took a gun and ammunition, and, after this metamorphosis in the shade of a friendly courtyard the three looked like full-fledged rebels against Versailles.

An old man, apparently the only person left in the quarter, hobbled out of a door and menaced the trio with angry gestures.

"I don't know which side he's on," said Frank, "and I reckon we'd better not stop to ask."

Five minutes later they were in the Communist lines. They joined a company of sinister-looking fellows who were slowly retreating from a barricade, although no enemy was in sight.

"Now, forward to the rescue!" whispered Frank to his father. "Come on, Sny!" said he.

. . . . .

When Dr. L'Argent had finished the task of getting the gravely wounded men placed in the ambulance, he returned to the nook where he had left Frank and his father.

"Now," he said, "I suppose we must get this woman shelter, although she did snap a pistol at me."

He looked down, then recoiled a step or two, and cried out in amazement: "Why, she is gone!"

He looked up and shouted for Frank, and then added :

"And the others are gone, too ! One would almost fancy that the woman had flown away with them through the air. I will be sworn that she was a witch !"

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE FORLORN HOPE.

ALMON CORNERS felt as if he were a member of a "forlorn hope" expedition. He knew enough of the great insurrection to appreciate the deadly danger in which he and his brave son now stood.

Gradually, as they went along, the dazed, misty feeling, born of the long seclusion in the gambling club, began to leave him. His blood bounded joyously in his veins. He felt capable of better things.

A deep and overwhelming sense of shame for his lapse from the path of honor surged through his heart at times, and made him almost long for a sudden bullet which might bring him oblivion. But when he looked at the bright, cheerful, undaunted face of his brave Frank, who gripped his gun as he had seen the Communists do, and who acted as if he were afraid of nothing, he felt a new inter-

est in living and a burning desire to retrieve himself by some deed of bravery or heroism.

Now was the chance; and here was his son leading him on as if *he* were the general, and the father, who had so sinned and fallen by the way, were only a common soldier. Yet it was right, and Almon Corners felt no pang of jealousy or humiliation. He turned as instinctively to Frank for leadership, in this dread moment of peril, as the sunflower turns to the sun.

Little by little the conviction shaped itself in Almon Corners' mind that unless they should reach La Grande Roquette before the Versaillist troops who were approaching that quarter, there would be no hope of saving the loved ones imprisoned there as hostages.

Almon Corners knew how deep the resentment of the Communists was for the slaughter by the Versaillists of their men, and he felt that as soon as the bugles of the infantry men of Versailles were sounding forth their joyous notes of deliverance in the dark old streets near the prison, it would be all over with the hostages.

This thought burned into his brain and strung his nerves to supreme tension. Life would not be worth living if they were to arrive too late, and he were to find that his little son and his gray-haired father were among the lost.

So deeply concentrated was Almon Corners on these solemn thoughts that he was hardly conscious of walking along the streets, or that he was disguised as a Communist, and that he carried a musket.

Suddenly a sharp whistle from Frank and a gesture from Sny, a little ahead of him, recalled him to his senses. He drew his breath hard, tightened his grasp on his gun, and stepped up hastily to rejoin the boys.

"Father," said Frank, "we must walk on eggs here. I can feel eyes looking at me from every direction. I don't believe we are in friendly territory. Don't speak out loud in English."

Although the boy's voice was firm, his face was pale and his lips were drawn. It was evident that he was in a state of intense nervous excitement.

Almon Corners said nothing for a moment, but drew closer to his boy, and brought his gun into a position where it would be ready to use.

As for Sny, he went along stealthy-footed, like an Indian.

They were in a labyrinth of the narrow but handsome streets which lie between the magnificent quarter of the Madeleine and the still more splendid section of the Opera, which was at that time just approaching completion.

Here, between the two modern and elegant quarters, high shouldered, quaint roofed old mansions stood side by side with superb new edifices. Vast court yards, opened into by massive oaken doors, and filled with carts and carriages, with household furniture, and the contents of neighboring shops, stored there with a view to their safety during the street fighting, disclosed themselves to the wandering trio. Now and then, on a balcony forty or fifty feet above their heads, they could see the timid figure of a young girl or of some gray-bearded man gazing for a moment timidly down upon them; then it would disappear as if by magic.

There were no signs of Communists or their enemies anywhere.

Frank and his father turned a corner and went into a second street, as deserted as that which they had just left. Here the silence was so great that their footsteps almost startled them.

"I can't stand this," said Frank. "I know that we are out of our track, and the first thing we know we shall be nabbed. Can't you see that the Communists have either been driven away from here, or have not been here at all? First thing we know, we shall have the inhabitants of the quarter, who are all down on the Communists, jumping on our backs. What do you say, father, shall we run for it till we see some blue jackets?"

"No, Frank," said Almon Corners. "We must be guided by the sound of the firing, and I suppose we shall be safer if we get somewhere near the fighting; but we must put on a bold front, and if any of the people here try to stop us we must tell them that there are plenty more behind us. And if necessary we must defend ourselves."

"I reckon three of us could whip a battalion of these bourgeois," said Sny. As he spoke thus, he thought of the grave peril which would surround them if a mob of the irritated inhabitants, believing that the Communists had been beaten and that they were flying from the regulars, were to suddenly arise at their back.

"Well, father," said Frank, "I tell you, I feel eyes looking at me, and I want to get well out of here. Ah! There is some shooting. Let us go toward it!"

They turned in the direction of the musketry firing, which was now becoming regular and continuous, and rounding another corner they came into a wide but short street, and there found their way blocked by a dense throng.

Frank thought he saw in this crowd a few uniforms of the familiar blue color, and so he urged his father forward.

"If they are only talking, father," he said, "we will go right along as if passing on to the fighting. They won't dare interfere with us."

In a minute or two they were at the edge of

the crowd. Their hearts almost stopped beating as they saw the cause of the gathering.

In the centre of a hollow square, formed by the excited lines of well-dressed men and women, ladies in morning robes, smart servants in their white aprons, lace caps, and canvas shoes, and even old men leaning on their canes, stood a beautiful young girl, certainly not more than seventeen years of age, with the blood streaming from a flesh wound in her white forehead.

At her feet lay a can of white metal such as is used in France for holding oil, wine, or vinegar, and at this receptacle everybody was pointing and chattering at everybody else in a high pitched key which prevented anyone from hearing exactly what was said.

The girl was of the "people." Her plain dress, her blue apron, and the handkerchief knotted about her neck showed this. Her black hair streamed down to her waist. There was a look of mortal terror in her eyes, like that of one expecting instant death. She dared not look up at the half-crazed people surrounding her, but stood with her head

slightly bowed forward, in an attitude of intense and wretched suspense.

Almon Corners understood the situation instantly. He had heard, during the last few days, constant reference to the danger from fires, which would arise when the Communists, driven before the regular army, would retreat. He had even joined in taking precautions in the house where his club was located. He knew the panic which the mere words "petroleum," or "fire," dinned into the ears of a property owner in these times, would cause. There was no mistake. This crowd had captured a woman who was a real or supposed *petroleuse*, and they were going to massacre her, unless she were rescued, within the next five minutes.

"What does all this mean?" whispered Frank, who put on a bold air and jostled several men who looked sharply at him. He was not as familiar with the petroleum craze as his father was.

Almon Corners rose to the level of the occasion.

"Frank, they are going to murder that

poor girl because they think she is setting fire to the houses. I don't believe she has had such a thought. Probably she is the wife or sister of some Communist, and may have been going to the very barricade we saw taken, to carry her soldier his dinner. Ah! Hear the men shout '*Petroleuse! petroleuse!*' I thought that was the trouble. Now, if she is lynched, we are! Do you understand? They will turn on us as Communists after they have killed her. We will outflank them, Frank. We will go to the rescue of the girl."

"Good!" said Frank, with the air of a general listening to the advice of a subordinate officer.

"But let me suggest, Frankie," said Almon Corners, "that you do not open your mouth during the whole business, because your French is not up to the mark. Mine will pass. Now see how I will bully this crowd of panic-stricken bourgeoisie!

"Here, here!" cried Almon Corners loudly. "What are you blocking the way for, citizens? Room here! There will be half a dozen battalions through here in five minutes. Clear the track! *Allons! Au large!*"

As he spoke he and Sny pushed right and left with their musket butts, nearly upsetting one sour-faced old fellow; and Frank, catching an exact imitation of the Communists, came after him like a young thunderbolt. The astonished crowd, a little startled by the announcement of the mythical battalion of Communists, fell back to the right and left, and Frank, his father, and Sny were in the centre of the square, and approaching the young girl, in less than a minute.

"What is all this row about?" said Almon Corners in his most careful French. "What are you mobbing this girl for? Don't you see she is carrying her dinner to her father or her brother? What do you mean by interfering with the service of the Commune? Stand back!" he yelled, as a well-dressed woman approached, and shaking her hand at him cried:

"She is a *petroleuse*. She has got to be shot! She wants to burn our houses over our heads."

"Well, citizeness," said Almon Corners, with a grim smile; "she can't burn *your* house

over *your* head just now, because you are not in it. If you take my advice, you will go home and stay there, because there will be a fight in the street in about fifteen minutes, and the bullets will be as thick as the folks are now. Don't you hear the bugles coming?"

Almon Corners heard no bugles, but he knew what the fancy of a nervous assemblage would breed. The woman threw her arms above her head and shouted wildly, and with three or four of her neighbors following, they ran away as if the foul fiend were after them.

"Now, get away! Get away, you others!" said Almon, winking to Sny to use his gun vigorously. Frank also took the hint, and applied his musket butt with such vehemence to a fat butcher's stomach that the man retreated in consternation.

"Now, citizens," said Almon, "you are all crazy. This woman isn't a *petroleuse*. How could she burn these solid stone houses with the little petroleum she could carry in her hands? You are mad! Now, Sis, pick up your dinner pail and run along. You will meet our men up there."

"I tell you she is a *petroleuse*," yelled a fat-faced man in a black broadcloth coat, with the red rosette of the Legion of Honor in his buttonhole. "We'll have her blood or yours!"

"No, you won't," said Almon Corners coolly. "You won't have anybody's blood. You are too fat. Run home and get into a good place where you can see the fighting. Come, move! Here come our fellows!"

He spoke in such a tone of command, and in such earnestness, that the crowd actually began to break up; but one old woman came swiftly forward and shouted, almost in Almon Corners' face:

"If the girl is not a *petroleuse*, let her prove it. Let her show us what she has got in that can!"

Almon Corners glanced swiftly at the girl, whose downcast face and dark eyes betrayed no other emotion than that of fear. He stooped and picked up the metal can, and as he did so, he whispered to the girl: "What is in it?" As he rose erect, he heard her say in a very faint whisper:

"Open the top and you will find a small loaf of bread. Show that to them."

Almon Corners knew he must act instantly. He pulled the cover from the can quickly, took out a loaf of bread, held it up to the crowd, and shouted:

"There! Are you satisfied now? Don't you see that the girl was fetching dinner to a soldier? Now, go away with you, and don't block the street! Do you think the Commune is dead because there is a little fighting going on? If you do, we'll soon show you the contrary."

As he spoke, he replaced the bread in the can, and handed it with the cover to the girl. His action was completely convincing. The crowd knew that it was the custom of the women in the workingmen's quarter to go down daily to the soldiers in the barricades with provisions for them. There was, too, a certain sense of relief in the minds of most of the people that they had not found a real *petroleuse*. That would have been too terrible.

So they passed away, chattering and grum-

bling, and as the noise of the musketry was getting louder and louder, they believed Almon Corners' statement that the Communists were approaching, and soon not one was left in the street.

"You did that well, father," said Frank. "You are general, I reckon."

"No, Frank," said his father quietly. "You are the brave young leader. I am only the soldier. But in this case a little knowledge of French helped us a good deal. Now, my girl," he said, turning to the rescued one, who stood as if in a kind of a dream, "be off with you, and remember that there are eyes looking at you from all the balconies. But tell me truly, what is in this can? It is quite heavy, and the loaf of bread was laid upon the top only."

The girl looked up with a cold smile. "It is full of petroleum," she said. "We will cheat the bourgeoisie yet."

Then she disappeared up a side street with such rapidity that the three Americans, gazing after her, almost fancied that she had been swallowed by the ground at their feet.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE CONVENT REFUGE.

THERE was a kind of inspiration in this rough work which set the spirit of the boys on edge. Almon Corners felt faint and discouraged from time to time, but he would have died sooner than have admitted it. As for Sny, he gloried in the thought that he might yet be of service to the good old man who had so often been kind to him. But, with his wider experience of the Commune than Frank possessed, he did not share the boy's confidence as to the possibility of a rescue. Yet he shut his teeth hard and there was a curious Western grimness in his look, as he thought: "We'll find them, if they are alive, and if it takes a year!"

Chance brought the trio a rare fright. The petticoats of the *petroleuse* had hardly disappeared around the corner when a little squad of Communists, led by a black-whiskered

sergeant, came slouching up, and gave the three Americans some very sharp looks.

"What are you doing there, citizens?" said the sergeant, coming so close to Almon Corners that he could have laid his hand upon him.

"Oh, nothing much," said Almon Corners, who had learned to speak excellent French, and never needed the accomplishment more than at that particular moment. "We have just saved a pretty girl from being torn to pieces by some bourgeois, that's all. I suppose you would scorn to waste your time in any such little service to the sex as that?"

"Ah, bah!" said the sergeant. "Are you making fun of me? You are a Pole, I suppose, by your accent, and one of us, or should be?"

"Yes, my brave sergeant," said Almon; "we are in the right cause." Sny and Frank were prudent enough to say nothing.

"Apropos, sergeant," said Almon Corners, feeling his face pale and his lips tighten with pain as he spoke. "Have you any news from La Grande Roquette?"

The sergeant gave him another suspicious look. "News from the depot where they keep the hostages, citizen? What are you thinking of? Do you take me for a priest?"

"Not so fast, not so fast, sergeant!" said Almon Corners. "You must have been drinking white wine this morning; you are as sharp as if you had been eating a file. One of our fellows was locked up there early in the insurrection for a little bit of insubordination, poor boy, when he was in his cups. He has been there ever since, and now we would like to get him out, as quick as possible, because he is a good Communist, and we hear that there is likely to be a clearing out up there. We would not like to have him go the wrong way." And Almon Corners made the significant gesture of pointing a musket.

"Oh, ho!" said the sergeant, "afraid he might get mixed up with the hostages and get shot! Is that it? Well, so he might, and so perhaps he has already! You need not take much trouble about him, if you are sure that he is at La Grande Roquette, for they say there was a massacre there this morning."

Despite his caution, Frank uttered a loud cry, which instantly brought down upon him the sergeant's spying gaze; but he had the presence of mind to push Sny away, muttering at him, and then caught up one foot in his hand, so that he seemed to be reproaching the awkward-looking youth for having stepped on the foot.

The repentant son of Grandpa Drubal seemed to feel his heart turning to stone. Then the terrible massacre which they feared so much had already begun—perhaps was ended! There was nothing now to do but go on and on until they met death or victory. And if they came at last to La Grande Roquette only to find that poor Grandpa Drubal and the innocent child had been slain with the other unfortunate ones?

"Well, well," said the sergeant. "*Bon Dieu!* I can't spend time here jabbering with you Poles. We have got to scatter a little mineral oil among these bourgeois before nightfall. So good-day to you, citizens, and don't forget that the regulars are not far off."

"That will give us a chance to exchange

politenesses with them," said Almon Corners, tapping his musket significantly.

The Communists went their way rather unsteadily, and the three Americans stood looking into each other's faces, wild-eyed, and with a certain despair in their gaze. Sny was the first to speak.

"Don't believe a mortal word of what he said. In war time rumors are thick as flies in August. What we want to do is to lay low a little while, then make a break across the boulevards and get away to the river."

"But how?" said Almon Corners.

"Ah, how?" said Sny. "That's a conundrum just now. Ask me a couple of hours later, and I will figure it out. Let's just meander down this way a little bit and get our bearings."

They moved on rather listlessly, each one absorbed in his own thoughts, each one planning how to save the others and himself from the danger which he knew must be imminent. Presently they found themselves drawing near to the scene of a spirited fight, judging from the explosion of shells and the rattle of

musketry, and a few steps further brought them into a street which ran at right angles with the Grand Boulevards.

"Look," whispered Frank, clutching his musket fiercely and pointing. One side of the magnificent Boulevard des Capucines was burning. Great time-blackened mansions down near the Rue Royale were slowly smouldering, resisting the fire inch by inch, as if unwilling to yield up the artistic treasures which were the accumulation of centuries. Here and there on the smooth roadway lay a dead soldier, and a few straggling firemen with their antiquated buckets and little engines were doing their best to subdue the conflagration.

But this was not what stirred their blood and caused it to recede from their cheeks, leaving them pale as the dead men near them. The sight which brought consternation to their hearts was the figure of a tall, good-looking Versaillist officer, immaculate in his smart tunic and his red trousers, his shining spurs and his glistening boots, and the silver-braided cap which showed that he was of high rank.

He stood in the middle of the roadway with a cane in his right hand, gesticulating as if he were shouting orders to someone at a distance. Frank could have sworn that the officer was looking directly at him.

"Ah, if that red-legged gentleman sees us," said Sny, "our tickets are ready for us. We shall have a short trip to Paradise." As he spoke he shrank back, and Frank and his father followed the example. "Yet we must get across somewhere in this neighborhood," said the boy. "But to try it now would be nothing better than suicide. We must lie hid until nightfall."

Almon Corners made no answer. The situation to him seemed desperate. There must be thousands of regulars slowly making their way up the river, on both sides of it. The presence of this officer indicated that the trio was perhaps already within the Versaillist lines. What chance would they have for their lives, dressed as they were like Communists, and bearing documents from a rebel general?

"Oh, if it were only night," sighed Frank. "Look, father, see how red the sky is."

"The Tuileries must be on fire," said Almon Corners, "and that light is exactly where the old palace should be."

"Yes," observed Sny, with his curious drawl, "that fire is kindled by the Communists. It must be that they are retreating. Our chances of reaching the Hôtel de Ville and the region beyond there are getting less and less every minute."

"But we *must* reach there!" said Frank, fiercely, taking off his Communist cap and dashing it to the ground in a frenzy of excitement. "Don't you know that we must save Grandpa Drubal and Will!"

The beautiful May sunlight was now beating down fiercely upon them. Almon Corners felt weak and helpless. The enthusiasm of his boy seemed no longer to electrify him.

The three turned again away from the Versaillist troops, helplessly, as an abandoned boat turns on the waves; and some instinct guided them to the open portals of an old mansion, the gray stone walls of which indicated its great age. As the shadow from the wall fell over them Sny cast an inquisitive

glance around. "This looks sort of deserted," he said; "let's stroll in."

A few steps further, and they came to a little gate with a tiny bell attached. Sny boldly pushed open the gate. The bell tinkled, but no one appeared. "Let's try that again," said Sny, He came out, and this time opened the gate more briskly. "Ting-a-ling-a-ling" went the bell gayly. But no one came.

"What's this writing up here?" said Frank. "It's '*Parloir*.' Why that's almost our word parlor, isn't it?"

Sny looked up. "Oh, it is as I thought," he said. "This was a convent, a little convent-school. See, here are all the evidences of it; the small *parloir* where people came to visit the scholars, and here, just beyond, is a garden and cloister with high walls all around. Say, look here, Mr. Corners, why don't we shut the door and take possession?"

Sny began to whistle softly, which was a sure sign that he was pleased. "But first," he said, "since we belong to the Commune just now, we might as well exercise our com-

munal authority," and he grinned. "Lucky, when I shifted my clothes," he said, "I put a few of my belongings into the pocket of this uniform, else I should not have had a piece of chalk just now."

"Why, what will you do with a piece of chalk, Sny?" said Frank.

"Just you, Mr. Corners, stand guard one side, and you, Frank, on the other," said Sny, "outside the door-way, while I chalk upon this *porte-cochere* [and as he spoke he swung outward one of the large folding doors] these words, which I reckon will protect us about as well as anything."

And in a broad, very legible, and much Frenchified script, he wrote with his piece of chalk: "*Defense D'Entrer* [Entrance forbidden] by order of the Commune."

"There," he said, standing back and looking at his work, "I guess nobody but the regulars will come in here now."

"It is a clever device," said Almon Corners, smiling approvingly at Sny. "But do you mean that we shall shut ourselves in here and wait for nightfall? Is that your plan?"

"Yes," said Sny, "what else can we do? Five hundred yards further, and we are dead men. In here are lots of rat holes to hide in. Besides, until this quarter is taken by the regulars we are safe from prying eyes. We must not lie down and go to sleep, but put our brains to work. Come on!"

No one seemed coming from either way. The trio glanced sharply from right to left; then upward, to see if they were observed. But the high walls of the convent were not overlooked by any windows. Frank and Sny brought the doors together with a clang, and were gratified to see that the key was safely in the lock.

"There," said Sny, "I think we are very much at home. Now let's sit down and take breakfast and plan our campaign."

And fumbling in the knapsack which he had taken from the dead men, when he also borrowed the uniform which he wore, he found a large piece of bread and a bit of cheese. "This is my contribution," he said. "What's yours, Frank?" Frank and his father produced from their knapsacks a

meagre supply of food, and the three sat down in a corner to munch and to think. Then one watched while the two others slept a bit, and by the time each had had his turn at watching it was late in the afternoon. The thunder of the cannon still resounded along the boulevard. They longed to go out and see whether the battle were moving beyond them, or were coming to snare them in this net. But they dared not reappear just yet. Now and then they heard loud voices, the oaths and shrieks of women, and the clatter of musketry outside. Once or twice Almon Corners, desperate with suspense and anxiety, urged them to take their lives in their hands and go with him in a wild attempt to cross the city and reach the river, the only line by which they could hope to get into the quarter near La Grande Roquette, because the regulars coming down from Clichy would soon cut off any hope of pushing through on that side of the central boulevards.

The hours pass slowly when pain and trouble accompany them, and to Almon Corners, as to Frank, the time between the late

afternoon and the coming of the cool, tranquil darkness seemed almost a century. A tear stole down Almon Corners' cheek as he thought what remorse might be in store for him. While he was engaged in these grim reflections he noticed that Frank, whose young head was leaning against a gray wall under an arch in the cloister, had fallen asleep again, and then he himself lost consciousness.

When he awoke he felt for a moment a wild alarm. His companions were missing; a light rain was falling, and his face was wet with it. He rose to his feet and grasped his musket, which was still at his side, for he heard stealthy footsteps advancing. "Who goes there?" he said in French, determined to sell his life as dearly as possible.

"All right, father," came the response in Frank's voice. "Don't speak so loud. We must work quickly now. We thought it was safer to let you sleep, for you would have hindered us from what we wanted to do."

"Well, it is done now," said Sny, "so Mr. Corners cannot object, and we have got some nice clean clothes for him here."

"Yes," said Frank, "we must change uniforms again. Only, to make sure we shall have our Communist clothes when we reach the Communist lines, I propose that we put the red on over the blue."

"Where," said Almon Corners, rubbing his eyes, "did you get these new things?" For Frank and Sny had thrown down at his feet a heap of clothing, and Sny was already lighting a little wax candle which he had taken from the pocket of one of the garments.

"That was easy enough," said Sny. "When we saw that you were so sound asleep, we went on a little scouting expedition by ourselves. We had several adventures, but we did not happen to meet any living regulars. We hadn't set foot in the Boulevard, though, before we came upon a heap of the nicest-looking dead ones you ever saw. There was no one to object, and so, as they were not likely to need their uniforms, we just helped ourselves and——"

"Great Heavens!" said Almon Corners. "You had the courage to do a thing like that?"

"We couldn't stop to think," said Sny, "for when we found that we are not only in the Versaillist lines at this moment, but that at daybreak they will begin to search all the houses, we made up our minds we must be equipped and ready for a start in an hour. You must understand that if they found us in this house we should be shot, and Grandpa Drubal would wait in vain."

Frank was already dressing himself in the uniform of a Liner who had evidently been in a severe fight, for there were several blood stains upon the coat which the boy now fitted snugly over his Communist clothes. He stowed away his blue cap in the pocket of his coat, pulled on the red trousers, set a red cap jauntily on his head, and looked as if he had served under the tricolor all his life.

"Come, father," he said, "dress, and let's be off to the river. To the river!"

Meantime Sny was equipping himself without any urging, and was rehearsing in a kind of sing-song voice a little plan he had formed. When he talked to himself they knew he was doing good work. It seemed to the father

and son as if they must now rely upon the instinct of this queer, gaunt youth, who seemed to bear a charmed life and to know how to get out of every scrape.

The night was warm, and from the many flowering shrubs in the cloister yard came a delicious perfume. The glory of the spring-time was abroad in the great city. For a moment the noise of musketry had died away. They might have fancied themselves in the garden of some peaceful villa remote from the strife and turmoil of cities.

The rain had ceased falling and the air was cool and pleasant. Sny now stepped forward, looking quite gallant in his uniform. "Just give me your musket," he said to Almon Corners. "That Communist thing would give you away. We have got plenty of weapons; we took care to provide ourselves," and opening a soldier's blue overcoat he took from it three guns and a pistol or two. These were quickly distributed. "Now we are ready," he said.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THEIR DESPERATE MISSION.

IN a few minutes they were at the corner of the street from which they had seen the Versaillist officer in the afternoon.

During the progress of the troops toward the centre of the city, the fight along the main boulevards had been terribly severe. Every step which the Communists yielded on these channels of circulation was so stoutly contested, that one of the best French soldiers afterward said, in a history of the insurrection: "They acted like bandits, but they fought like real soldiers."

Early on Tuesday the Gare St. Lazare was stormed, and the whole quarter of the Place de l'Europe was in the hands of the regulars. General Clinchant, after taking the new Opera House and the buildings surrounding it, cut his way straight through the obstacles around Notre Dame de Lorette, and after

sanguinary fighting in the front of the Church of the Trinité and in the narrow streets of the Chaussée d'Antin, moved up toward the Rue de la Paix and was fighting gallantly for possession of the great commercial quarter near the Bourse, or Exchange.

Those of the inhabitants of these quarters who had been terrorized during the insurrection now swarmed around the liberators and helped to throw down the barricades, and to scrub off from the walls the flaming proclamations of the dying Commune.

The tricolor began to appear at hundreds of windows. Commerce started up anew. The small merchant took down his shutters for the first time in twelve weeks, and here and there a cab appeared, the driver looking as if he expected to be stopped by the guards as an aristocrat because he went on wheels.

And now came out of their hiding many worthy barbers and butchers and candlestick makers and tailors and hotel keepers who had been carefully hidden away in cellars or in attics while the insurrection was triumphant, but who resumed their places in the

National Guard to which they belonged, and at once assumed a most bloodthirsty air.

These rather ineffective soldiers were recognized by the generals commanding the regular troops as of small avail for street fighting. But they were good enough to maintain order in the streets already occupied, and so they were set at this work—while the regulars, of whom there were none too many for the terrible task in hand, passed on to points where there was real fighting.

It was to this occupation of certain points by the loyal National Guard that Frank and his father and their companion owed the ease with which they traversed the central boulevards and passed down to the Rue de Rivoli. Had the alert sentinels of the regular army challenged Frank and his companions, they would all have been lost. To the unpractised eye of a citizen barber, newly dressed in his long unused uniform and holding his gun as if he were afraid of it, the sight of any red-capped personage was sufficient to inspire awe.

And so it was that when the trio marched

boldly across the great street they were not compelled to halt. The sleepy citizen-sentinel saluted awkwardly, and did not venture to enquire where they were going or whence they came. Not two hundred feet away a company of weary regulars was sleeping upon its arms, worn out with the furious fighting of the day.

The trio, in fact, owed something of its safety to the exhaustion of the officers and soldiers of the invading force.

The adventurers now entered upon the ruined district over which the great battle had swept, and at each step they came upon a scene of horror. Beautiful mansions and immense warehouses had been burned, and over them dense clouds of arid smoke were still rising from their ruins.

Here and there were piles of dead bodies, regulars and Communists, in the fraternal embrace of death, awaiting the convenience of the captors for burial. When they came out upon the Rue de Rivoli they could not restrain a cry of horror. The splendid avenue, with the immense stretch of the Tuileries

Garden on one side and with the great ancient arcades of carven stone on the other, was strewn with guns and knapsacks, and with dead men lying with their faces upturned to the dark blue sky; with lamp posts, which had been shot away; with fragments of ornamental railings; and in one case a great wrought-iron balcony, which had been swept down by shell fire, had fallen on a group of dead men.

Away to the left the clock tower of the Tuileries was still smouldering. Now and then the light breeze sighing through the immense mass of red-hot coals and ashes sent out a fiery stream toward the skies.

Sny led his companions along the front of the garden until they reached a shaded place, where he turned and said: "Now you must climb," and he caught hold of the iron railing and clambered over it dexterously. Almon and Frank followed his example. "That's lucky," said Sny. "There's a cavalry patrol every few minutes, I heard them say, along the Rue de Rivoli."

They stole through the great shadowy

alleys of the garden, past the statues which gleamed white from their pedestals, and hurried toward the Seine.

They were agreeably surprised to find no soldiers of either army in the garden, and when they reached the side toward the river they found the gate leading to the terrace, on which Napoleon III. used to take his afternoon promenades, wide open. The bank of the Seine, with its stone parapets, was before them.

Sny's heart now began to beat rapturously with hope. He foresaw a clear route up the river to the Hôtel de Ville, and even past it, should they find that the regulars had already reached there. They swung down over the parapet and floundered along the steep slope until they reached the water side.

From the left bank of the Seine, so imposing at night, with its massive lines of palaces, silent but majestic, with the deep, dark stream flowing at their bases, came cries and the sound of scattered musketry. Here and there torches flashed, drums were beating, and now and then a church bell rang. Evidently

the fighting would be hot as soon as the sun rose.

"My kingdom for a boat!" said Sny. "If we cannot get one, we shall have to dodge along the bank, and that will be slow work."

"Surely we must find one somewhere here," said Almon Corners.

They were now near the arch of a bridge, and, as the shadows fell upon them, Sny advised the father and son to sit down quietly together while he went off in search of a boat. He was gone so long that they were beginning to fear that he had fallen a prey to some marauder, or that a patrol had got him, when they were delighted to hear the soft ripple of water falling from oar blades, and the low whistle which Sny had agreed upon as the signal of his return.

At the risk of breaking their necks they hurried down the steep slope to the water's edge. Sny rowed up to meet them. "Did you hear me pounding?" he asked. "I thought I should wake the dead, and that we would all be captured. Here is a boat, and it isn't very leaky. I reckon it will carry us all.

I discovered it under a little pier just below here, where the owner had chained it up and probably expects to find it after the fighting is over. I thought the chain would never give way. I used a pretty big stone. Come on!"

Five minutes later they were tranquilly making their way up stream in the middle of the broad, black current, under the impulse of Sny's regular oar beats, which were now almost noiseless. From time to time they came out into the faint moonlight, and then they made themselves as small as they could in the boat, fearing that they might be fired upon or halted, and all their plans ruined. Up past the Tuileries and on and on they went. Almon Corners could have fancied that he was floating in an enchanted bark in fairy-land, had it not been for the dull pain, caused by the suspense, gnawing at his heart.

He was suddenly aroused by the soft touch of Sny's hand upon his shoulder. "Just a little delicate," he said, "to know when to change colors again. I reckon the regulars have not got much beyond the Hôtel de Ville.

We must beat up stream until daylight, then reconnoitre and see which party is going to receive us when we land."

"And appear in their uniform, I suppose," said Frank.

"Of course. With these trousers on, we would not have five minutes to live, once in the hands of the Communists."

All this seemed trivial to Almon Corners. He was constantly thinking of his poor father, and the nearer he came to La Grande Roquette the more grim and dreadful seemed the thought of meeting him there. But why should he hope to find him in that sinister place? It was all rumor, report, and guess-work. Perhaps he was far away, on his return to America. Yet no: he would never desert little Frank. He must still be within the walls of Paris.

Sny kept a terrible vigil that night. It was his great sinewy hands which propelled the frail bark up stream, while both Frank and his father, worn out with fatigue and emotion, slept like logs. It was Sny who deftly hugged the shore when the moon seemed to

be looking for him and his companions; Sny who finally, just as the faint flush of dawn was visible in the sky, and hardly to be distinguished from the red of the many leaping and roaring conflagrations, landed the little party safely at a point a few hundred yards above the Hôtel de Ville. He had advised them shortly before landing to take off and cast overboard, as he was doing, the regular uniforms which they had donned, and their weapons. "Perhaps we can reason with the regulars if we are caught," he said, "and explain to them that we are in Communists' clothes but not insurrectionists, but reason would be out of place with the Communists."

"Yet," said Almon Corners, "if we fall into the hands of the regulars with a letter from General Dombrowski in our possession, it will require a good deal of explanation to get us into safety."

Frank said nothing, but shut his lips tightly, and prepared for the worst. He felt the danger, but something impelled him on and on toward La Grande Roquette.

"Well, look here!" said Sny suddenly.

"I will just spy out the situation." And there was a twinkle of heroism in his gray eyes as he used these words. "You stay in the boat, and if I am not back in a few minutes just shove off and float along the stream again. If I have to make a bolt for it, I can swim out to you. No use in risking more than one head in this matter."

Frank and his father were with difficulty prevailed upon to accept this suggestion, but finally they did so, and it worked well. Sny went courageously up the first street that led from the parapet by the Seine, and in a quarter of an hour he came back quietly, whistling "Bonnie Doon."

"It is all right," he said; "the regulars have not got above this point. But they are coming, and we must hurry. Now, remember, the part we have to play is that we are bound for La Grande Roquette with an important military message from Dombrowski. Nine people out of ten won't question us, but we may meet the tenth who is too sharp for us. If we do, we must act as occasion dictates, I reckon."

"Then forward is the word," said Almon Corners, feeling a new courage and strength. And the trio set off through the streets over which a delicate fume of smoke, from the battle which was not far off, was lightly floating.

They had not gone far before they came plump upon a good-looking Communist, who stood sentinel at the corner of the street. "Where are your guns, citizens?" he said. "Every man must be at his post now, you know. We are falling back, I am sorry to say. McMahon and Satan himself are pushing us."

Almon Corners muttered that their guns had been lost at a barricade from which they had been compelled to retreat; and the sentinel said nothing more, but muttered behind their backs in a way which was anything but reassuring.

A little farther on they came to a small wine shop, the red sign of which was still illuminated, and there they saw a curious spectacle.

Half a dozen soldiers were seated in the door-way, and as the trio drew near the men

seemed to be asleep. But a second glance showed Sny's experienced eye that the men were in the deep lethargy of intoxication. They had been drinking all night, and the stupor of the wine, and the fatigue, had locked them in the embrace of a sleep which was profound and dreamless. Sny stepped boldly up and peered over this heap of unconscious men into the shop. Not a soul was visible. The half dozen muskets of the drunken men lay beside them. "Why, here," said Sny, "is our chance. These men are too lost to the world to use their weapons if they had them. We must arm ourselves and be ready for the worst." He quietly picked up three muskets, and handed one to Frank, and one to Almon Corners, then gripping the other in his big right hand, with his left he detached the cartridge boxes from three of the sleeping forms.

"Now," he said, "I reckon we'd better be going. These men might be disagreeable if they should happen to wake."

The trio went round a corner, and in a few minutes were far away from the wine shop.

"That was a clever move on your part, Sny," said Frank. "But suppose the men had suddenly wakened up?"

"Oh, well, then we would have said that we were the guard on patrol, and they would have believed it. They were too far gone ever to have found us out."

Half an hour later, the three Americans were in the wild retreat of the Communists from the Hôtel de Ville and its neighborhood. They were pushed along the wide streets, here pausing momentarily to build barricades and there to pull them down, now half-crazed by the screaming and shouting and quarrelling of the drunken, mutinous rabble on every hand, and through it all unquestioned by anyone—for everybody now was wild with fear.

Frank and his companions never knew how the dreadful day passed. All that they were conscious of was a steady concentration upon their aim to get nearer and nearer to the quarter of La Grande Roquette. As luck would have it the current of retreat set in that direction, and every hour it became more desperate and demoralized, as the retreating

masses heard the thunder of the cannon and the cheers of the regulars behind them.

The late afternoon was deepening into the evening when Sny bethought him to ask a Communist soldier, beside whom he had been jogging along for some time, how far they were from La Grande Roquette.

The gruff soldier glanced around him, and said: "Only a few hundred yards, citizen. We ought to go up there and blow up the hostages with gunpowder, just to punish the regulars for hurrying us along so fast this afternoon."

"Ha! ha!" said Sny, "good idea." But the moment he got a chance he hastened to Almon Corners, and told him that they must be at the prison before dusk at all hazards.

As twilight was creeping along the sky, the trio looked out from a barricade where they had sat down for a few moments' rest, and saw the dull, gray walls of La Grande Roquette looming mistily before them.

CHAPTER XXXV.

BEFORE THE TRIBUNAL.

GRANDPA DRUBAL and Citizeness Marcelle sat near the grated window which communicated with the corridor.

It was early on Wednesday evening. The terrible night fires were beginning. The prisoners in La Grande Roquette knew that the Versaillist troops had succeeded in entering the city. The news had mysteriously filtered through the grim walls.

But it had brought no joy to the hearts of the prisoners, for nearly every man and woman in the vast building was held as "hostage," and since the Communist guards had heard of the ruthless killing of Federal prisoners, they rudely announced to their captives that they might all expect to be shot within the next forty-eight hours.

Grandpa Drubal heard this horrifying news with composure. He had seen enough to con-

vince him that his jailers and the half-crazed soldiers were capable of any crime, and he prepared himself to meet his end calmly.

But he was resolved that poor Will's young life should be spared, if there were any virtue in appeal to divine and human aid. At the last moment he would implore the guards to hide away the innocent child until after the fury of the massacre was passed, and then to commit him to the care of the American Minister.

Little Will had been dangerously ill, and nothing but the tender and unceasing vigilance of Marcelle and the care of Grandpa Drubal and the old priest had preserved him.

The gaunt citizeness, worn to the bone, her lean features lighted up by the celestial glow of self-sacrifice, was like a hungry lioness defending her offspring.

She battled with Death, and drove him discomfited away. The fits of exhaustion, from which it had seemed as if the child would never rally, had passed. On Wednesday morning Will sat up on his pallet, drank abundant draughts of water, and ate vora-

ciously of the coarse food, of which there was always plenty for him, because the prisoners vied with each other in saving bits for him.

Then he electrified his grandfather by saying in a thin, piping voice, with much animation:

"Grandpa, I saw Frankie walking with a great tall man, and I asked him who he was, and he said"—here the boy lowered his voice and spoke with a certain reverence—"he said it was papa."

Will fixed his eyes upon Grandpa Drubal's face. The old man struggled to be calm, but privation and worry had weakened him. The tears rolled down his cheeks, and he could only murmur brokenly:

"My poor child, it was in a dream that you saw your papa."

"Perhaps it was a vision of heaven that the child had," cried Marcelle.

"Oh, no, Marcelle," said Will gravely. "Frankie is not in heaven, I know. He wouldn't go and die and leave us in the lurch in such a place as this. He is hustling around and fixing things to get us out, I bet you."

The air of conviction with which these words were said awoke a strange remnant of hope in Grandpa Drubal's breast. Who knew what mysterious, subtle inspiration might have given the child a hint and conviction of coming rescue?

He looked at the old priest in the hope of getting his own idea confirmed. But the good man had not understood all that Will had said. He bowed his white head, and said softly, in his quaint broken English:

"It is not strange that ze child is so calm. He is nearer to ze God than we old men who have wandair so far from Him."

Then he crossed himself devoutly, and seemed to forget all that was passing around him.

Grandpa Drubal led Marcelle apart from the others to the grated window, and said to her:

"The child gives me a mighty strong idea that we may be saved yet. I cannot explain why, but he does."

His eyes searched her face for comfort.

"No, citizen," said Marcelle, throwing back her head and gazing calmly at her questioner.

"I do not think there is any hope. I believe it is for to-morrow." She shuddered. "Oh, *Seigneur!* if I could but see my Jean once more before I die!"

"But we cannot, we *must* not die here like rats in a trap!" said Grandpa Drubal. He raised his clenched hand, but when he perceived his loss of strength, he hung his head.

"Listen, Citizen! One of the guards was drunk last night, and I made him talk. The Archbishop of Paris and some of his good priests are to be shot this very night, here in the prison, where they are hostages like us. The order for their execution has been signed. If we hear the noise of fire-arms in the prison to-night, we may be sure that the priests have been shot!"

She paused a moment, and then laid her hand upon the old man's arm.

"Do you suppose," she said, "that they will spare us if they would not spare them? No, we are doomed! Paris is on fire in twenty places. The Commune means to perish bravely, and to pull everything down in the wreck."

For an instant the old sinister look, which Grandpa Drubal had noticed on the face of the citizeness on the first day he saw her, came into her eyes.

Then it vanished, and an expression of tender pity and resignation took its place.

"If I could see my husband once more!" she sighed, and she leaned her head against the wall and covered her face.

Suddenly there was a flurry of steps, and then a host of noises, the clink of spurs, the clank of swords, the dull thud of musket butts lightly striking the stone pavement in the corridor.

Marcelle threw aside her old shawl, and said: "Listen!" in an agony of suspense. Her face was white; her eyes were set.

"Perhaps they are coming for us now," she whispered.

Grandpa Drubal glanced toward little Will, who had crawled over to the old priest, and was nestling at his side, and whispering something in his ear.

"God's will be done," he said simply, and he took poor Marcelle's trembling hand, kissed it, and then remained silent.

But the sound of steps and of weapons died away, and all was still again for ten minutes. Then there was a low detonation followed by two, three, four others.

Marcelle gasped, and would have fallen had not Grandpa Drubal sustained her.

"That was the execution of the priests in the courtyard," she whispered. "Did you not hear the shots? It will soon be our turn now. But we shall save the child; I know that we shall save the child."

They went over to Will and the priest, and were contented to see that they had heard nothing, and that the other prisoners were quiet.

"Grandpa," said Will in a whisper, "I have been telling him," pointing to the priest, "that he might put on your long overcoat and your nice travelling cap, and then he would not look like a priest, and the guard would not abuse him any more, and would give him enough to eat."

"Why, yes, Will," said Grandpa Drubal, "we might try it," and it gave him an idea upon which he proceeded to act at once.

He showed the good priest where the

articles mentioned by Will lay in the bottom of his trunk.

"If we are summoned to a tribunal, or if we are rescued, pull off your robe and put on these things, and we may save you."

The priest said that he would consult the good God in his prayers, and would act as He should give him light. "If He should tell me it were a sin to quit my priestly robe, even to save my life, I would not do it," he said very gently.

"Heaven forbid," said Grandpa Drubal.

. . . . .

It was now eight o'clock in the evening, and a silence as of death had fallen on the long room. Outside, the joyous May sunshine, which had illuminated Paris every day this week of battle and massacre, had slowly died away into the delicate tints of twilight. On the Place in front of La Grande Roquette sinister looking crowds of men and women, drunk with wine and still more intoxicated with blood, were moving to and fro with hungry faces, like wild animals in their cages just before they are fed.

The women would from time to time turn toward the gates of the prison and shake their fists and utter imprecations.

"Blood! Blood! Blood!" was the cry of this heartless throng. It had learned that the Versaillist generals were making few prisoners during this fighting; that many of their husbands, and brothers, and lovers in the Communist battalions were shot like dogs as soon as captured. And now as the twilight wove its mystical veil above the great city, and the weird light of the conflagrations, whelming in ruin palaces and gorgeous public buildings upon which sculptors and painters had for centuries lavished the treasures of their skill and genius, these women turned their faces toward the doors of La Grande Roquette and clamored for blood.

Just then half a dozen insignificant-looking young men, overdressed in the cheap style of the workingmen's quarters, took seats around a small table covered with red cloth, in a room in the prison not far from the old refectory containing the majority of the prisoners.

All these men had been drinking heavily, and were in a quarrelsome mood. All smoked incessantly, rolling their little cigarettes adroitly with the tobacco-stained fingers of their right hands. One of the youngest men uttered a horrible oath, and struck his fist upon the table, because there was no wine.

"If I can't drink wine, I must drink blood!" he said, with a horribly ferocious leer.

His companions laughed. An older and graver man, dressed in a dust-stained but handsome uniform, now came forward and rapped loudly on the table.

"Citizens," he said, "attend to what I am about to say."

"Depends on what it is," said one sulkily.

"Short sermons to-day, I say! Let the procession begin!" clamored another.

"Citizens," said the elder man, without noticing the interruption, "my name is Jean Vercingetorix Durand, officer in the service of the Commune. After the beating which we got in April at Chatillon I was arrested and

sent to Mazas as a traitor. It is needless to say that I was no traitor, but I was kept a prisoner until two days ago. Then I was acquitted without a trial. My first duty was to come here and officiate at this tribunal to try the hostages. It is not often that a prisoner becomes a judge so soon," he added with a hoarse laugh.

The men looked at him anxiously. "We represent the people of the quarter," one of them said a little aggressively. "We mean, citizen delegate, to see that you do justice," and they laughed loudly in concert.

Jean Vercingetorix Durand shuddered. These birds of prey gave him a sense of nausea.

"I expect two other delegates," he said, "we must wait a little for them. You must excuse me, I am greatly fatigued. I was out all last night hunting for my wife. She has disappeared. I can find her nowhere."

"She will come around all right after the fighting is over," said one of the young men, flicking his cigarette ashes upon the red cloth. "You need not wait for your other two dele-

gates to commence business, citizen! All that you have to do is to bring the hostages out and let them be questioned here. We will tell you how to work the matter. To those who are pardoned, you must say "Cellule" (cell), which means that they are to be taken back where they came from. To those who are not pardoned, you will say "Cellule provisoire" (cell for the time being). These will pass down the stairs one by one. Do you understand? And as they pass out into the square, the crowd will finish them up. *N'est-ce pas? Parbleu!* It won't be difficult. There are a hundred women out there with rifles and pistols!"

Jean Vercingetorix Durand's lean unshaven face grew very pale. He shaded his eyes with one hand and seemed to be reflecting.

"What kind of a sawdust doll has the Commune sent us?" said one of the young men, and the others roared with laughter. The citizen-general looked up and hammered on the table with his clenched hand. Four Communist soldiers came straggling in, then a dozen more, then fifty more.

"Bring the hostages before me, six at a time," he said. "See that my orders are exactly obeyed, or I will have the prison burned over your heads. Silence! Let the first lot be brought in."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

FRANK AND HIS COMPANIONS TO THE RESCUE.

JEAN VERCINGETORIX DURAND felt like a man walking on the edge of an abyss. Giddiness seized him, and a sinking of the heart, as if he were gazing down into terrifying depths, came over him.

He looked around the sordid room with its ungarnished walls, its bare floors, and the little flight of steps leading to the door which communicated with the interior of the prison. The more he looked at these steps, the more he became convinced that they were red. He peered carefully at each one of them, and knew that a few minutes before it had been a dull, dirty gray. Yet now each step seemed the color of blood.

Perhaps he would have fallen into a revery if he had not heard the harsh voice shouting: "To work! to work! You are a nice kind of

a stuffed sausage to be a delegate from the Commune!"

Then a thin piping voice said:

"Here come the hostages at last. That is lucky, for we would have gone after them and sent you and the soldiers into the place yonder along with them to settle with the crowd."

The delegate from the Commune looked up, and saw the guards bringing out six pale and wan creatures, who looked about them as lambs look when led to the slaughter.

There was a roar of exultation from the young "representatives" of the people. The first hostage who presented himself was a priest. One of the fiends arose and mockingly offered him a cigarette.

The person who now stood before the tribunal was the old priest who had so long shared the tribulations of Grandpa Drubal and little Will. At the last moment he had refused Grandpa Drubal's kindly offer of a disguise.

"I have consulted God," the good man said, "and he has told me not to desert my robe. I am ready for the sacrifice."

He had not long to wait. A hoarse voice arose out of the crowd at the table. "Priest, do you know that the Versaillists are killing our brethren?"

The priest answered that he had heard nothing from the outside world since his arrest.

"Priest," said the harsh voice, "you are a hostage; you understand that hostages must suffer. What shall be done with this hostage?" The voices arose in clamorous concert: "*Cellule provisoire!*" And the guards, who had been instructed hurriedly in whispers in the meaning of these horrible phrases, pushed the unresisting priest before them. He stumbled down a step, went into a little ante-room; then the door opening upon the great Place was opened. The priest was thrust violently out, and the door was shut behind him.

In the tribunal room, the waiting hostages breathed hard, and cast piteous looks upon each other, as they heard a hurried clamor, and the noise of shots outside.

The second hostage, a young student who

had been secretary to a prominent statesman, was pushed before the table.

"What shall be done with him?" said the thin piping voice. And the clamorous concert again said: "*Cellule provisoire!*"

The victim went away to his death holding his head high and disdaining to utter a single word.

The ignoble young men at the table laughed long and loudly. "Some more!" they cried. "Let us give the Versaillists a lesson!"

Jean Vercingetorix Durand was silent. He realized that this horrible band had usurped his functions; that they allowed him to sit there merely because he seemed to sanction their crimes; that if he crossed their purposes he might be killed.

A soldier who had deserted from the regular army came next. "*Cellule!*" said the concert. His life was saved. Next came a landlord who, by his own admission, had five houses in Paris. "The landlord must have the honors of the provisional cell, of course," said the piping voice, and he was pushed out —to his death.

Two others were sent the same road. The guards came back with pale faces. One of them trembled so violently that he could not hold his musket, and it rolled on the floor with a clatter.

"More, more!" cried the hoarse concert. "More!"

"I wonder what will come next," thought Jean Vercingetorix Durand, as he heard the creaking of bolts and the rattle of chains when the door was reopened.

He looked up, and there on the threshold stood his wife, Marcelle; her thin face aglow with a spiritual resignation which he had never seen there before. Her eyes shone as if she were expecting a great joy instead of death.

Jean Vercingetorix Durand's heart stopped beating for an instant. Then it went on as before, furiously knocking, as if it wanted to make its way out of his bosom.

Just then a loud roar from the populace outside caused the guards and the men at the table to turn their heads in the direction of the noise. But Jean had kept his eyes fixed upon his wife's face.

She raised her right hand and placed her forefinger upon her lips; then she shook her head. Jean understood that she wished him not to recognize her. He would save her, or would raze the prison to the ground. Yes, he would save her!

But who was that old man with white hair following her and leading a little child? He had caught sight of Grandpa Drubal and Will, who were now pushed rudely forward by a soldier. "Am I dreaming?" thought Jean Vercingetorix Durand. He tried to rise and go to them, but his limbs failed him.

Two guards approached Marcelle and brought her up to the table. She hurled one of them away from her, whereupon little Will uttered a loud cry, and running to Marcelle caught her frayed and worn dress, and stood in front of her as if he were trying to protect her.

In this attitude he remained for a full minute, looking at Jean as if trying to recognize him. Evidently he remembered his face, but could not believe that the interpreter of the hotel in the Rue Castiglione had become judge in this dreadful tribunal.

"Oh, brush away the woman and her mome (child) with her," said the thin piping voice. "Into the *cellule provisoire* with them! We have work before us!"

"Oui! Oui! *Cellule provisoire!*" croaked the young men.

Grandpa Drubal came forward and raised his hand. He was about to speak.

As the guards were approaching Marcelle and the child to drag them to the fatal door, a new clamor arose outside.

The self-appointed judges looked anxiously at each other. Perhaps the Versaillists had arrived. But the noise seemed more significant of surprise than of joy and dismay. So Marcelle and Will were pushed back and driven with Grandpa Drubal into a corner, and the guards who were taking them to death ran to see what had happened.

Presently they returned, saying:

"Three messengers from General Dombrowski have just arrived on special business. They demand to see a delegate from the Commune."

"Let them enter," said Jean Vercingetorix Durand. "I will see them."

"No! No!" clamored the murderous throng around the red-covered table. "Let them wait."

"Who dares interfere with the delegate from the Commune?" shouted Jean, suddenly transformed into a lion by the imminent peril of the wife of his bosom, and the foreigners whom he knew to be innocent. He drew his sword and struck a blow on the table with it. "I will cast you into prison if I hear another word from your lips. Let the messengers from General Dombrowski enter without delay. Put a post of twenty soldiers at the door, or we shall have the crowd rushing in upon us."

"*C'est drôle!*" said the thin piping voice, with a satiric twang in it. "Why, they told me in the Faubourg last night that General Dombrowski was mortally wounded at Clichy."

"Liar!" shrieked Jean Vercingetorix Durand, who did not know whether the report was true or not, but was determined that it

should not spoil his plan for stopping the slaughter of the hostages. "Say that again and I will send you to taste the delights of the *cellule provisoire!*"

The thin, piping voice began once more, but broke off in a sort of frightened "quack!" Jean's threat had had its effect.

Grandpa Drubal, who understood but little that was said, but who had instantly recognized the ex-interpreter, now sat down on the steps and called Will and Marcelle to him.

"It is like a terrible dream," said the citizeness. "I understand nothing, but I feel that my husband will save us all."

Grandpa Drubal did not feel convinced. He thought that this was only a respite. As he closed his tired eyes and stretched his arms toward poor little Will, it seemed to him as if the world were disappearing forever.

. . . . .

And now came a clatter of weapons, and a great shout of anger, as the prison doors were closed in the face of the mob, and the messengers of Dombrowski were ushered in.

Three stranger figures never appeared on a

more dreadful scene. One of the new-comers was slender, and of middle age, the other two were slight and boyish. The faces of all were so begrimed with smoke and powder that their features could scarcely be distinguished.

The taller of the three had been wounded in the right cheek, and wore a blood-stained bandage. The cap of the younger was pierced with bullets, and his left shoe was splashed with blood. The garments, too, were disordered.

Jean Vercingetorix Durand sheathed his sword and advanced, in a stately manner, with one hand thrust into his crimson sash, to meet the messengers from the renowned general.

When he came near the youngest one, he uttered a loud cry and held out his hand impulsively. Then the group withdrew into a corner and conversed together in low tones for several minutes, after which Jean Vercingetorix Durand advanced to the middle of the room and said:

"Citizens, I hold in my hand the order of General Dombrowski to release, immediately, the American General Corners, his grandson,

and the nurse, who have been unjustly confined here. The American general, who has had great experience, is needed by General Dombrowski to aid him in the defence of Paris. "Here is the order, citizens, to release him, and all his, instantly, and here the seal of the Commune."

One of the three men now handed a paper to Jean, who held it up. "Service de la Commune," he said.

The men crowded up to see it. "Dogs!" he cried, thrusting it into their faces. "Do you doubt it?" They fell back as if the paper he flourished had been a loaded pistol. Jean Vercingetorix Durand returned it to the young man, who put it in his breast pocket, and stood quite still.

Jean Vercingetorix Durand was master of the situation now.

"The sitting of the tribunal is suspended!" he said, in his loudest tones. "The American general and his people will be instantly released. I will accompany them to a point from which they can safely reach General Dombrowski."

Guards cleared the hall, and the blood-thirsty cigarette-smoking "representatives" of the people found themselves hustled into the Place before they could recover from their surprise.

The youngest of Dombrowski's messengers now approached Grandpa Drubal. "Put your hands over Will's mouth," he said, in a whisper, "and hold him tight. You are saved. Don't speak now, but get ready to come with us."

Grandpa Drubal's white head fell heavily backward. He had not only recognized Frank, but his keen eyes had pierced the disguise of Almon Corners, and he knew that his long lost son was found again.

The great joy had overcome him, and he had fainted.

"Courage!" whispered Jean Vercingetorix Durand in English to Frank. "We must revive the old man, and he must put on a bold front while we pass through the mob of ruffians in the Place. And wrap up the little boy's head in a coat; he must not see the horrible spectacle out there."

Ten minutes later, the procession of the rescued and the rescuers, escorted by a strong squad of Jean Vercingetorix Durand's soldiers, issued from a side door of the prison, and began to make its way toward the right of the great Place, leaving the shouting and screaming mob of blood-thirsty men and women on the left.

"Quick," said Frank, "they are beginning to move toward us. We shall have them all on our backs in five minutes, and they won't listen to reason."

Grandpa Drubal leaned heavily upon the shoulder of his son, and the fresh air seemed to make him dizzy.

"I must rest a moment," he moaned. "I can't walk so fast."

At this moment Frank gave a cry of mingled rage and dismay, for he saw, standing at the door of one of the shabby-looking houses, the weird figure of the little hunchback whom he had seen when he went with General Dombrowski to the Hôtel de Ville.

The boy observed that the sinister face of the deformed man was lighted up with a savage

smile. He hoped that he might pass without recognition, but the little hunchback came forward, and mockingly took off his hat.

"Who is this little lame son of a sparrow?" said Jean Vercingetorix Durand, and at the same moment two big soldiers poked their gun barrels rudely into the hunchback's face.

Just then Grandpa Drubal gave another moan, and his son was obliged to lower him to the sidewalk, where he sat down, holding his head in his hands.

While the little company were gathering about the old man, anxious to help him, a great shout arose from the barricades at the entrance of the Place. It was a cry of mingled rage and fear.

At the same moment there was a rush of newly come troops retreating toward Père la Chaise, and Frank suddenly felt two warm hands applied to his cheeks, and received a kiss upon his forehead before he could get a definite idea of the person who thus saluted him. Then he heard a familiar voice, and looked up in astonishment. It was Laurette, the Laurette who had so cleverly tricked Dr.

L'Argent at the barricade, and who had fled after giving Frank her message from Dombrowski.

"Here we are again!" she said, in her round, ringing tones. "It is a regular family party. But you can't stay here," she said, suddenly sinking her voice to a whisper. "You must move back with the retreat, and trust to luck for a chance to get into safer quarters."

The little hunchback now stepped forward again with an important air, as if he were about to take possession of the whole party.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CALM AFTER STORM.

"I KNOW that bird there," said Laurette. "He used to be an employé in the Central Markets, and was always imposing fines and making mischief for the poor work-girls. They say he belongs to the Committee of Safety now. I wonder what mischief he is hatching."

Poor Frank understood but vaguely what Laurette was saying, but Almon Corners caught at it eagerly, and saw that danger was hovering over the party. How or what he did not exactly know. He was about to wave away the little man with the explanation that they were under the Commune's protection, when a few words explained the hunchback's motives, and threw a flood of light upon many things which had before been mysterious.

"Citizens!" cried the hunchback. "Will you stand here and see this group of conspira-

tors artfully drawn out of the clutches of the Commune! This tall fellow here, in the uniform that doesn't fit him, is a spy. He has been maintaining relations with Versailles for months past, by means of carrier-pigeons. These other people are his accomplices. The old man is one of them. I had him arrested and locked up with his little grandson here long ago, but now they have got them out. It is a black conspiracy, citizens, and we are betrayed!" He raised his arms high above his misshapen back and head, and shouted and shrieked in the vehemence of his emotions.

Sny understood all that was said, and a feeling of horror ran through him when he saw clearly, for the first time, why it was that Grandpa Drubal had been arrested, and why Frank had been subjected to all the anguish and suspense of the past few weeks. He recognized that the peril was deadly, and that he might be torn in pieces by the excited throng.

But Sny was a youth of expedients, fertile in resources, and quick to act. Like a true American, he recognized that truth would be

safer than any evasion, so he stepped forward and, catching the little hunchback by his hair, he shook him with such fury that the fellow gasped for breath, and clasping his hands, begged for mercy.

Laurette was artfully swaying the Communists, who were retreating along with her, to side with Frank and his companions, and she stared open-mouthed at Sny's intervention and at the flood of French, somewhat mispronounced but all clear and comprehensible, which he poured forth at the hunchback.

"Fool and idiot!" he cried, giving a shake with each epithet. "Then it was because you were spying on me that you sent that poor old man to prison, and made him and his little grandson run the risk of their lives in that horrible place! It was because of me that you have done this great wrong, was it? And you thought, triple ass that you are, that you were serving the cause of the Commune in meddling with what I was doing! Let me tell you then, Mr. Hunchback, that you have made yourself ridiculous, and laid yourself open to serious correction!"

He paused for a moment and gave the hunchback a chance to recover his breath, and to stammer: "But if you are not a spy, then what did you mean by sending carrier-pigeons and receiving them every day for weeks? Tell me that!" and he glanced around in triumph upon the Communists, who were beginning to look ominously at Sny.

"All stuff and nonsense," said Sny. "How do you know that the carrier-pigeons ever went to Versailles at all? Or that they carried a message concerning the Commune or any of its movements, or anything but meteorological memoranda? Do you understand, you thundering donkey? Memoranda about the phenomena of the heavens, you ass! instead of what is taking place on the earth! It is a long story, and I don't propose to explain to you why the man, in whose employ I am, didn't want his observations interrupted by the fighting. I ought to thrash you soundly for accusing me of spying, you——"

Almon Corners listened to this tirade with a sense of stupefaction. He understood dimly that Sny was playing a part, but he saw that

the big words and the rough manner in which he treated his accuser, besides the fact that he was in Communist uniform and appeared to be in good and regular standing, was having its effect on the crowd.

Finally Laurette stepped up to the hunchback and thrust him out of the way with one deft push of her plump arm. "Don't you see," she said to the rough men around, "that this old man is faint, and must be taken out of the crowd?"

Two or three minutes later the little party of Americans was moving slowly toward the slopes of Père la Chaise, and the hunchback, who had been the cause of so much misery to them, had disappeared in the throng around the prison.

. . . . .

On the afternoon of Monday the 29th of May, just as long lines of prisoners, guarded by the sombre-looking gendarmes on horseback and by columns of infantry, were reaching the central boulevards on their way from Belleville and Père la Chaise, where they had been conquered and captured, a

little company came out upon one of the great balconies of the Grand Hotel, overlooking the Boulevard des Capucines, and leaned on the iron railing to watch the scene below.

Grandpa Drubal and his newly found son and his grandsons were safe at last, and with them was the faithful Suy, full of contrition because he had been the unwitting means of causing them so much trouble and placing them in such deadly peril.

The Commune was crushed. The serpent of the insurrection was dead at last, after having pulled down upon its folds many a stately monument, many noble buildings; after having wrought a havoc such as the century had never seen before. Day by day and step by step the regular army had pushed back the furious insurrectionists to the heights, where they made their last stand because there was no chance to retreat.

On the evening of Friday, forty-eight hours after the deliverance of Grandpa Drubal, Generals Vinoy and Ladmirault united in a grand attack upon all the insurgents on the heights of Belleville, Menilmontant, and the

cemetery of Père ia Chaise. During the whole of Saturday, the 28th of May, great batteries, which the regulars had placed upon the heights of Montmartre, fired incessantly across the city, raining shells upon Belleville, and into the place of tombs where the Communists had intrenched themselves. By a series of brilliant charges, barricade after barricade was taken by the Duke of Auerstadt, and gradually General Ladmirault reached the summit of the heights.

Meanwhile General Douay struck the positions of the Communists at Belleville in their centre, and General Vinoy, pushing his men up the slopes of the cemetery of Père la Chaise, gave the crowning blow. They then turned, and by a warm charge of a corps of marines on the barricades at La Grande Roquette, seized the prison and saved many of the hostages who had been in agonies of suspense for more than a week. With Vinoy at Père la Chaise, the Commune was helpless. It was death or surrender.

On Sunday at four o'clock all was over, and Marshal MacMahon's proclamation announced

the deliverance of Paris. "Order, labor, and tranquillity will now revive," wrote the Marshal, who was a few years later to be President of the French Republic, and to whose energy and skill was due the suppression of the greatest insurrection of modern times.

. . . . .

"Sny," said the sweet voice of little Will, "why do some of the prisoners wear their jackets inside out?" And the child pointed to a melancholy procession of prisoners straggling between two lines of gendarmes along the sunlit boulevard below.

Sny gave them a sharp look. "That," he said, "is because they are deserters from the regular army. See, their caps are put on with the peak to the back, and their jackets have been turned inside out as a sign of disgrace."

"But why did they desert, Sny?" said the boy.

"Well, I don't know. Perhaps they thought the insurrection was the right side."

"Oh, they could not think that," said little Will. "Grandpa always said that it was a wicked and dreadful thing, and that

the Commune would finish in blood; didn't he, Frankie?"

"Hush, Will!" said Frank, in a whisper. "Here comes Marcelle."

And little Will stepped back from the balcony to the door of the great drawing-room, which opened directly upon it, clung to the skirts of Marcelle, and looked up sympathizingly into her pale face.

She no longer seemed the warlike virago of those first days at the hotel in the Rue de Castiglione. She had passed through the deep waters and had learned to suffer, and the crowning blow—which had been the loss of her husband, the fiery Jean Vercingetorix Durand, who had fallen during the fight of Saturday in Père la Chaise—had left her in a kind of a marble calm. She had little now left to look forward to in France, and Frank and Will had already begged their grandfather to take her with them when they returned to America.

Marcelle stood just within the drawing-room. She was still fearful lest someone might denounce her, and she might be

dragged away, possibly to execution, with the other poor wretches who were passing below on the road to their death.

"It all seems like a dream, doesn't it, Marcelle?" said Frank.

She raised her hand to her forehead, as if to brush away some unpleasant memories; then she said, with her sharp staccato accent:

"A hideous dream: one that makes my blood run cold to remember. But it was not a dream, as you see by what is going on below."

At that moment a servant appeared and announced Dr. L'Argent.

Marcelle turned pale, and rushed away into an inner room before the boys could beg her to remain. "Poor thing!" said Frank, "no wonder she is frightened. I am sure I should be nervous enough if I thought anyone were likely to denounce me to those troopers below. She is safest there with grandpa. He needs her care, too. I don't believe he will be out of bed for three weeks."

"If your grandpa was anything but the most extraordinary man that ever lived,"

said Sny, drawling out his syllables with great deliberation, "he would have died from the shock of any one of the half dozen surprises that he has had lately. Why, he is just a natural wonder; one of the old timers; one of those men that they don't raise nowadays."

"Grandpa is all right," said little Will softly. "Now that he has found papa, he will live for ever so many years yet."

"Ah, there you are, my fine fellows!" said a joyous voice, with an Australian burr in it. "I am glad to find you all alive and well after passing through so many horrors. Come now, my brave Frank, without Dr. L'Argent you would have been in a pretty pickle up there among the tombs the other day, hey? Don't you think I deserve the medal for saving life? Took you twice out of perilous positions, hey? I shall expect your Congress over the water there to vote me a gold watch, as they do when a foreign sailor saves one of their seafaring men. And you, Master Sny, doesn't your conscience give you a twinge now and then when you think that your fancy for

carrier-pigeons got all this interesting family into such a mess of troubles?"

Sny colored up, and then he turned pale. "You don't need to remind me of it, doctor," he said softly. "If any man ever felt sorry for anything which he was not strictly to blame for, I am sure I feel sorry for that. But who could have dreamed——"

"There now," interrupted Frank, "no more of this, doctor. And you, Sny, no more repentance. Who knows, if we had never met you—we might have gone away——" and here his voice faltered, and something very like a sob came into his throat, "and my father might never have been found!"

"Ah, well, Frank," said the doctor, dropping into a chair at the window and lashing his boots with his light cane, "it has been a season of horrors, and if I am not mistaken there is more to come. If I had *my* way, all those poor creatures below would be pardoned and sent about their business; but the government seems determined to give them a lesson. Among all that I have seen sacrificed in these mad times I don't know that I regret the fate

of anyone more than that of poor Laurette. Ah! she was a keen one, a real woman of the people, all ruse and smiles and stratagems. She could lie like a tramp, and look you right in the eye all the time. She could fight like a true soldier, and yet she was a real woman, too. She was almost beautiful as she lay there on the barricade, with her hands clasped together, after the fight. I wonder what really killed her? There was no bullet wound visible. Perhaps she died from sheer excitement, as many a man and woman has done in these days."

"Heart-break, possibly," said Sny. "When she ran away from us and jumped on the barricade she looked like a person who was going to her death. I could not stop her, and I don't believe anything human could. She seemed to think, after the regulars had got the mastery, that there was nothing worth living for."

"And so, very likely, there was not," said the doctor musingly. "Poor thing, it was far better for her to have perished on the barricade, even for a mistaken idea, than to be

dragged through the streets and imprisoned for weeks, and then perhaps conducted to the execution post."

"Oh, dear," said little Will. "What horrible times! Why can't people love each other instead of hating and fighting all the time? Why do they fight, Dr. L'Argent?"

"I give you my word, my dear child," said the doctor, "I don't know, and I don't believe they rightly know themselves."

"If I live a hundred years longer," said Frank. "I never shall forget the last thing I saw just before you and your men gathered us up and took us away. We had fallen back as far as we could, away from the fighting, so that the regulars might see that we were not combatants, and I stood just at the top of a long hill which was fairly crowded with curious-looking marble tombs. I remember thinking what a strange place it was for two armies belonging to the same nation to be fighting in, and while we were all huddled together, expecting very likely to be shot at by your men, or perhaps by some of the retreating Communists, I looked down; and

there, almost at my feet, on the very top of a little heap of dead folks, lay the hunchback, the man whom I told you about, doctor. Do you remember?"

"Yes, the real author of your poor grandfather's woes."

Here Sny looked very uncomfortable, as he always did when the subject of Grandpa Drubal's mishaps were mentioned.

"It gave me a great shock, I can tell you. At first I fancied that the little man was alive, and was crawling up the slope to strike one more blow at us. He seemed to have hated us terribly, although we had never done the slightest thing to injure him or his cause. Well, he's gone with the others, poor wretch! I suppose he thought his name would be historical, and, by the way, we don't even know what his name was. But when I think of how he bullied General Dombrowski one day, when I called at the Hôtel de Ville with him, and then to think of his miserable end up there among the tombs——"

"It gives you a real impression of the strangeness of human destiny, don't it,

Frankie?" said the doctor. "Well, well, life is a big drama. We must not judge anybody very harshly."

"I don't know," said Sny; "if anybody is to be judged harshly, I think it is the man who turns against his country, his city, his own nation, just to gratify a miserable ambition or whim, in the hope of establishing some petty doctrine. I have not got any sentimental objections to thinking that such men deserve exactly what these fellows down below are going to get," and he pointed to the melancholy train of prisoners.

"Now then," said the doctor, "to see the good grandpa! Come, little Will, you must not hear any more of this wild talk. Your mind has supped full of horrors. Now you must have a long rest, and go down to Normandy and play in the green fields before you sail for America."

"And so he shall, doctor," said Almon Corners, coming in with a bright smile on his pale face.

"Bravo, *mon ami*," said the doctor. "Those are the right sentiments. We all

need rest, and if I can leave I will go with you to some quiet country place," and slipping his arm through that of Almon Corners, the doctor bustled away with him to see Grandpa Drubal, who was prospering under his skilful care.

Little Will went in search of Marcelle, without whom he was never happy very long, and Sny and Frank were left alone on the balcony.

"Well, Sny," said Frank, "it is decided that you go with us. Don't say no. My father would not be satisfied to leave you here. Who knows what may happen any day in this whirlpool of battle and bloodshed? Father even wants you to go to America with us."

"Well, that demands a heap of thinking," said Sny, in his gravest manner. But a bright light was dancing in his gray eyes, and it was evident that the proposition from Frank's lips was a pleasant one for him to hear. A moment later he said, with increased gravity: "I reckon that your father has not told you that he found out where I used to live?"

Frank looked up in genuine astonishment.

"Why, that's glorious," he said. "No, he has told me nothing."

"Well, it isn't any great secret," said Sny. "Your father has seen my father many a time when he was hunting down in the Southwest. My father was a great sportsman until he sort of got to—drinking—and cutting up, and then I ran away and went to sea, come over here, and that's all there is to it."

Frank drew a long breath. "Why didn't you tell me this before, Sny?" he said.

"Well, it only came to a head yesterday," was the long, gaunt youth's answer. "Now, I reckon I'll have to go home and hunt up the old man and reform him. I think that will keep me pretty busy for a year or two."

Sny's gray eyes twinkled, but his lips trembled, and Frank saw that it was not safe to pursue the subject any farther.

"There is one thing, Sny," said Frank, "that I have always longed to know; and now it is all over, perhaps there is no harm in asking how you came to be interested in sending messages by the carrier-pigeons."

"It was all an accident," said Sny. "The

Belgian painter who had the studio used to amuse himself with sending pigeons from there to his native village in Belgium. When the first siege came, and he was thinking of leaving before he got closed in for good, he let me have the studio to stay in on condition that I should send him a message by one of the birds every little while to let him know that a certain lot of things, which he had concealed in the studio, were still safe. I reckon I ought not to tell you what these things were, because I promised not to, but they were valuable. I reckon he'll get 'em safely some day."

Frank's imagination at once conjured up visions of gold and silver, hidden in the secret recesses between the floors over the studio on Montmartre, but he said nothing.

"So I kept up my pigeon telegraph, as you might call it, and used to get responses from him, and, as luck would have it, we were not interrupted during the first siege at all. When the Commune came on, one day I was surprised to get a message from him by the old boss gray bird there, you know, asking

me to keep him posted about the Commune's movements. I thought it over, and at first it seemed to me it would be kind of wrong to do it. And then, when I saw them murdering and robbing and doing all sorts of desperate things, I made up my mind that they did not deserve my help and that the other side did. And pretty soon I discovered that the messages I sent out to him went around to Versailles all right. He couldn't send me any money for a while, as that would have given us away, and that made it hard sledding, as you know. But we worked quite a game against the Commune, till our little hunchback friend happened to get hold of it, and you know the rest."

"Why, it's a regular romance, Sny. You ought to have a reward from the government. And what became of all the pigeons?"

"Oh, they are all alive and well, I suppose. You saw the boss gray bird when you came into Paris with the regulars. I've carried him stowed in my pocket and managed to feed him all through the late unpleasantness. He's here now." He tapped his capacious

breast. "We'll hunt the others up before we leave Paris. I got quite fond of them," added Sny; "but if I had supposed they were going to get Grandpa Drubal and the rest of you into such a peck of trouble, I reckon I should have wrung all their necks long ago."

As Sny finished speaking, a crash of cymbals and a roll of drums announced the approach of a marching brigade, and with light springy step and with radiant mien the regular troops passed quickly along, bringing up the rear of the procession of prisoners. The great band was playing a brilliant operatic air, the notes of which seemed hardly to harmonize with the warlike scene, but to announce that the end of bloodshed and of suffering had come, and that the capital was once more to resume its traditional gayety.

"That music sounds good, Sny," said Frank, leaning over the balcony. "Heigh ho! In this sunshine up here among the trees, and with this merry music ringing in my ears, I can almost imagine that the whole history of the last two months has been noth-

ing but a dream, and that I have just woke up out of it."

"Frankie," said little Will, suddenly reappearing, "what is that nice music for?"

"It is to make the soldiers march quickly when they are tired, I suppose, Will," said Frank.

"But why must they march when they are tired, Frankie?" asked the little fellow.

"Ah, now, Will, if you have begun with your 'whys,' I know that you won't stop for half an hour unless I just cut short your questions by running away."

And he stepped back into the drawing-room, leaving Sny to face the child's light artillery of questions.

THE END.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES
THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below

NOV 3 1947
NOV 17 1947
APR 2 1953
REC'D LD-URL
MAY 07 1990
DEC 05 2002
UCLA YRL/ILL
OCT 10 2005
RECD YRL JAN 27 2006

Form L-9
25m-10,'44(2491)

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

PS
2174 King -
K38u Under the red
flag.

Robert Mann
NOV 3 1947

University of California, Los Angeles
L 005 846 218 5

PS
2174
K38u